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ABSTRACT

The first of four issues in this volume consists of these articles: "The Fourth 'R'--Relating"; "On Baseball Cards and Literacy"; "On Literacy and Success"; "National Assessments: What They Can and Cannot Do"; and "In the Classroom: The Integrated Journal." It also contains two book reviews and a list of resources on adolescent literacy, at-risk youth, and dropouts. A supplement, Media Focus, contains "Exploding a Myth: TV Watching Is Not Passive" (Emery); "World View on Media Education"; "Commercial Advertising--Does It Have a Place in the Classroom? Two Views on Youth News Network"; and two book reviews. Issue 2 has these articles: "Concerning Literacy and Ethics"; "Ethics and Educators: Traveling in Hope"; "On Bamboo Literacy"; "On the Increasing Importance of Visual Communication"; "Drawing a Link to Literacy"; "Thinking about Writing and Thinking"; "Sponsorship and Education: Asking Some Questions"; and "Business-Education Partnerships that Work." The Media Focus supplement contains the following: "Will the Real Michelangelo Please Stand Up..."; "The Virtual Classroom--A Pilot-Project in Media Education"; "Highlights from 'Constructing Culture: Media Education in the 1990s"; "World View on Media Education"; five book reviews; and a list of conferences and events. Issue 3 contains the following: "Literacy Lessons from History"; "On the Principle of Postmodern Literacy"; "On Pygmalion' as a Literacy Narrative"; "On Values in the Classroom"; "Sculpting Gender: Media, Muscle, and the Construction of Fit' Bodies"; two books reviews; summaries of presentations from the UNESCO conference on urban literacy; "Copyright: Educators Meet the Policymakers"; "Feminist Literacy Workers Network Holds Inaugural Conference"; and a list of resources on volunteers in education. Contents of the Media Focus supplement are as follows: "Mastermind on Media: Montreal May 1992"; highlights of the International Center of Films for Children and Young People conference, Children, Moving Images, and Their Future'"; "Children and Critical Viewing: Media Literacy Conference"; "World View on Media Education"; and two book reviews. In Issue 4 are found the following: "Literacy and Human Rights"; "On Connecting Narrative, Thinking, and Women's Ways of Researching"; "On Something Called Critical Thinking"; "Equity and Diversity--Principles of Good Workplace Education"; "Job Descriptions: Making Expectations Clear to Students"; "Literacy and Street Youth"; two book reviews; and "Beyond the Composition Ghetto." (YLB)

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Literacy across the Curriculum
Connecting Literacy in the Schools, Community and Workplace

Volume 8
Nos. 1-4

Centre for Literacy
Montreal, Quebec

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Supplement:
Media Focus
See centre spread

March 1992 Vol. 8 No. 1

Literacy across the curriculum

Connecting Literacy in the Schools, Community and Workplace

The fourth 'R'— relating

> *To prepare my school-attending generation of the nineties for its productive period in the twenty-first century, our educators should have taken the trouble of rationalizing their curriculums so that the elements meshed and complemented each other... What was missing was the discipline relating one body of knowledge to another. I never learned how to relate the fundamental truths of the various courses I took. It was too late when I discovered that my teachers and instructors had neglected the fourth "R" of education - Relating.*
> *— Noam Rabinovitch, student.*

"The Fourth 'R'" was written by a Montreal college student in 1991 as a submission to an essay contest (see BOX 1). The question was: How can education in the 1990s prepare students for the 21st century?

This analysis of his school experience fit like a piece of the puzzle into the larger analysis of literacy, schooling and public policy that is woven into this issue of *LAC*. Not only do courses and programs not relate, but curriculum and assessment do not relate; policy from different branches of the same ministry do not relate; and policies from different ministries and different levels of government frequently cancel one another out entirely.

Dropping Out
and
Dropping In
A Study of Youth and Literacy

Dropouts

This fragmentation can be studied through the issue of dropouts. Students who drop out are receiving increased attention recently in both Canada and the U.S. People without a high school diploma are disproportionately represented among the unemployed and promise to become part of a permanent underclass of the undereducated, unemployable of the future.

Even though some critics claim that the demand for higher and higher levels of credentials is another form of inflation, there is general agreement that some minimum level of basic skills is needed for the constant retraining and upgrading that will characterize the workplace (see BOX 2).

Research and action: The gap

Last year I was sitting at a roundtable on literacy when one participant said his board needed money to do research on the reason for dropout. I suggested that there was already a substantial body of research. We know all the possible reasons; it is a matter of finding out

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The Centre for Literacy Montreal Québec

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which ones are most relevant to a particular student population and then implementing policy and program change, some already tested and known to work. The gentleman ignored the comment and we spent almost an hour discussing the matter.

This is an example of too much available information not getting to the people who need it. I can go to my library shelf and find in-depth studies on dropouts and on a range of intervention programs that have been successfully implemented across the continent. The Center for Early Adolescence (p.12) at the University of North Carolina is one of the outstanding centres which has been researching, writing, and testing pilot-projects for almost two decades on issues related to early adolescence, including dropping out Their project on "Adolescent Literacy" is examining the connection between students' reading/writing and eventual dropout. Among their findings is the observation that almost all interventions come far too late. Literacy is not necessarily the primary reason for dropping out, but it is a significant contributing factor.

A large number of dropouts have such serious difficulties with reading that it influences their eventual decision to leave school. Many of these students have already fallen at least a grade level behind by third year elementary, and by the time they enter high school, they are so weak that they have little chance of coping with the new demands. The Center in North Carolina has published recommendations for schools and parents on many of the factors related to literacy. They are but one of many sources of information and models.

Why, then, is so little research reflected in the government policies and pilot-projects on dropouts now being funded? The Minister of State for Youth has undertaken a Stay-in-

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The Centre for Literacy
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The Centre gratefully acknowledges the support of Dawson College

BOX 1

The fourth "R" — an excerpt

How would the fourth "R" have helped me? Well, in my first semester in the Social Sciences program, I registered for seven courses organized in what was called a grid arrangement. I had to take two compulsory subjects - Freshman English and Phys. Ed. In addition, the program called for two Humanities, two Social Science "core subjects" and one elective. As a result, my weekly courseload comprised two sessions each of basketball, Dr. Faustus and selected English Lit readings, the Mediterranean World, the USSR, Society, Macro-Economics and Computers in the Modern World/WordPerfect 5.1.

I passed all of these courses individually, but hadn't the foggiest idea of how one interrelated with the other, how they harmonized, how they collectively revealed a deeper meaning. Seven courses meant seven teachers to satisfy. I satisfied my basketball coach that I could do an adequate lay-up and foul shot. My English prof agreed that I had touched a minor truth here and there about the literary merits of Marlowe and other poets... I had memorized enough vital statistics about the Mediterranean World and the USSR to earn a passing mark, and played back my notes on Society and Macro-Economics with enough accuracy not to have to repeat them. The computer course required only learning by rote, a kind of self-programming on the lowest level.

Had an extra group of instructors been added to the staff who oversaw my efforts, I would have gained much more from that semester. Each member of this group would have been a "relater" with special training and competence in two or three of the subjects I took. One relater, for example, would have been specially qualified to highlight the parallels between the discipline of team sports and the laws governing society. Another might have made me aware of the connection between poetic sensibility and the wanderlust of seafaring or nomadic peoples, while a third could have pointed out how the computer was indispensable to the development of our globally interdependent economy.

Noam Rabinovitch, student
Vanier College, Montreal

continued from page 2

School initiative. Funding comes through local Employment and Immigration offices, theoretically to be more responsive to local needs. The goal is admirable. The reality is that duplicative projects are being funded all over the map without anyone asking whether each has been done before, and whether it worked.

If a particular program or strategy has been well-tested and found to work, it should become part of the permanent funding base from a ministry of education. Stay-in-school projects may be most effectively run as partnership endeavours, but they need permanent ongoing funding, not short-term project-based funding. This is the problem that plagues adult literacy programming. Now it is being repeated with dropouts who will be part of the next generation of adult literacy statistics.

Can policy relationships be made? There are models. Before any project is submitted for funding, there should be a mandatory "literature search" to demonstrate that all existing programs/models have been examined and analysed. The National Literacy Secretariat is now asking that anyone requesting funds have consulted the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) to be aware of similar projects in the country. Such preliminary research ought to be a prerequisite for any project funded by government.

In the U.S., the State of Hawaii has an integrated governor's literacy policy, linking adult literacy, workforce education, family literacy, and projects for students-at-risk; it insists that all these strands must be seen as part of one tapestry. In Canada, the province of Alberta has released one of the most coherent policies on adult education seen in this country. We have no evidence of what programs will evolve from these policies, but the attempt to "relate" what has prevously been fragmented provides some hope.

We know what to do about dropout and about a host of other education problems; we have yet to relate what we know at the policy and funding levels. **L.S.**

The Centre for Literacy has all documents mentioned in the article.

BOX 3

An integrated policy: A discussion of definition

The word "literacy" has come to represent all the foundational skills necessary to achieve the goal of being productive, responsible citizens. Consequently, it is impossible to establish an absolute and unqualified definition of literacy that satisfies the demands of all these expectations. . In Alberta we recognize that the basic skills necessary for adult learning and development must be distinguished into the categories of communication skills, living skills, and production skills. Literacy, the ability to read and write, is but one aspect of basic skills. Taken together these basic skills make up the foundations for adult learning and development.

Meaningful discussion and concerted action are made more difficult by the fact that the field of adult literacy is confounded by confused and contradictory definitions of terms. The result is that too often, without consideration of an individual's skills and circumstances, a person is labelled an "illiterate" when his/her level of schooling is below some arbitrary standard. Almost all universal measurements of "illiteracy" based on school completion or on tests of literacy competence serve only to over-simplify complex issues by ignoring differences in culture, social expectations, and economic demands.

The problem of "illiteracy" cannot be solved by deciding how many illiterates there are and forcing them all into classrooms until they can meet some minimum standard for reading and writing. Since very few Albertans are totally without reading and writing skills, it is a misnomer and disservice to label adults with low basic skills as "illiterates". The further distinction between "absolute illiterates" and "functional illiterates" does nothing to resolve the confusion about definition nor to redress personal insult. The cause of adult literacy would be well served if we were to drop the word "illiterate" as well as a characterization of individuals from our vocabulary altogether.

Foundations for Adult Learning and Development is a flexible, dynamic concept that can adapt to changing social values, economic demands, educational expectations, and the needs of the individual.

Government of Alberta, November 1991

BOX 2

Basic skills and future work

Little evidence suggests that technological change will require dramatic increases in the skills needed to obtain quality employment in the modern economy. In part, this conclusion reflects the tendency of technologies to develop in ways that adapt to the available levels of job-related skills. On the other hand, basic skills such as numeric reasoning, problem-solving capabilities, written communication, and literacy are likely to become even more important. The 20-30 percent of the displaced worker population with deficiencies in basic skills, as well as labor force entrants lacking strong basic skills, will face difficulties in adjusting to technological and economic change.

(Issues in Science and Technology, p. 25, Fall 1987).

4 TO PONDER

RED SOX
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Mark William
DANNY HEEP
OUTFIELD
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FLEER

1 On baseball cards and literacy

Whenever the subject of literacy comes up, what often pops first into my mind is a conversation I overheard eight years ago between my son Sam and his best friend, Willie, aged six and seven, respectively: "Why don't you trade me Many Trails for Carl Yats... Yesits ... Yastrum-scrum." "That's not how you say it, dummy, it's Carl Yes ...Yes...oh, I don't Know." Sam and Willie had just discovered baseball cards. Many Trails was their decoding, with the help of first-grade English phonics, of the name Manny Trillo. The name they were quite rightly stumped on was Carl Yastremski. That was the first time I remembered seeing them put their incipient literacy to their own use, and I was of course thrilled.

Sam and Willie learned a lot about phonics that year by trying to decipher surnames on baseball cards, and a lot about cities, states, heights, weights, places of birth, stages of life. In the years that followed, I watched Sam apply his arithmetic skills to working out batting averages and subtracting retirement years from rookie years; I watched him develop senses of patterning and order by rearranging his cards for hours on end, and aesthetic judgement by comparing different photos, different series, layouts, and color schemes. American geography and history took shape in his mind through baseball cards. Much of his social life revolved around trading them, and he learned about exchange, fairness, trust, the importance of processes as opposed to results, what it means to get cheated, taken advantage of, even robbed. Baseball cards were the medium of his economic life too. Nowhere better to learn the power and arbitrariness of money, the absolute divorce between use value and exchange value, notions of long- and short term investment, the possibility of personal values that are independent of market values.

...And baseball cards opened the door to baseball books, shelves and shelves of encyclopedias, magazines, histories, biographies, novels, books of jokes, anecdotes, cartoons, even poems. Sam learned the history of American racism and the struggle against it through baseball; he saw the depression and two world wars from behind home plate. He learned the meaning of commodified labor, what it means for one's body and talents to be owned and dispensed by another. He knows something about Japan, Taiwan, Cuba, and Central America, and how men and boys do things there. Through the history and experience of baseball stadiums he thought about architecture, light, wind, topography, meteorology, the dynamics of public space. He learned the meaning of expertise, of knowing about something well enough that you can start a conversation with a stranger and feel sure of holding your own. Even with an adult — especially with an adult....

Literacy began for Sam with the newly pronounceable names on the picture cards and brought him what has been easily the broadest, most varied, most enduring, and most integrated experience of his thirteen year life. Like many parents, I was delighted to see schooling give Sam the tools with which to find and open all these doors. At the same time I found it unforgivable that schooling itself gave him nothing remotely as meaningful to do, let alone anything that would actually take him beyond the referential, masculinist ethos of baseball and its lore.

Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," ***Profession 91.*** *Modern Language Association.*

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2 On literacy and success

[“The Verger” by Somerset Maughham tells of a church employee who is dismissed after sixteen years as verger when the new vicar discovers that the man cannot read or write. The following excerpt picks up Albert's story just after the dismissal]

He considered the matter from every point of view and next day he went along the street and by good luck found a little shop to let that looked as though it would exactly suit him. Twenty-four hours later he had taken it andwhen a month after that he left St. Peter's, Neville Square, for ever, Albert Edward Foreman set up in business as a tobacconist and newsagent. His wife said it was a dreadful come-down after being verger of St. Peter's, but he answered that you had to move with the times, the church wasn't what it was, and ‘enceforward he was going to render unto Cæsar what was Cæsar's. Albert Edward did very well. He did so well that in a year or so it struck him that if he could run two he could run half a dozen, so he began walking about London, and whenever he found a long street that had no tobacconist and a shop to let he took it. In the course of ten years he had acquired no less than ten shops and he was making money hand over fist. He went round to all of them himself every Monday, collected the week's takings and took them to the bank.

One morning when he was there paying in a bundle of notes and a heavy bag of silver the cashier told him that the manager would like to see him. He was shown into an office and the manager shook hands with him.

“Mr. Foreman, I wanted to have a talk to you about the money you've got on deposit with us. D'you know exactly how much it is?”

“Not within a pound or two, sir; but I've got a pretty rough idea.”

“Apart from what you paid this morning it's a little over thirty thousand pounds. That's a very large sum to have on deposit and I should have thought you'd do better to invest it.”

“I wouldn't want to take no risk, sir. I know it's safe in the bank.”

“You needn't have the least anxiety. We'll make you out a list of absolutely gilt-edged securities.. They'll bring you in a better rate of interest than we can possibly afford to give you.”

A troubled look settled on Mr. Foreman's distinguished face. I've never ‘ad anything to do with stocks and shares and I'd ‘ave to leave it all in your ‘ands,” he said.

The manager smiled. “We'll do everything. All you'll have to do the next time you come in is just to sign the transfers.”

“I could do that all right,” said Albert uncertainly. “But ‘ow should I know what I was signin'?”

“I suppose you can read,” said the manager a trifle sharply.

Mr. Foreman gave him a disarming smile.

“Well, sir, that's just it. I can't. I know it sounds funny-like, but there it is, I can't read or write, only me name, an' I only learnt to do that when I went into business.”

The manager was so surprised that he jumped up from his chair.

“That's the most extraordinary thing I ever heard.”

“You see, it's like this, sir, I never ‘ad the opportunity until it was too late and then some'ow I wouldn't. I got obstinate-like.”

The manager stared at him as though he were some prehistoric monster.

“And do you mean to say that you've built up this important business and amassed a fortune of thirty thousand pounds without being able to read or write? Good God, man, what would you be now if you had been able to?”

“I can tell you that, sir,” said Mr. Foreman, a little smile on his still aristocratic features. “I'd be verger of St. Peter's, Neville Square.”

W. Somerset Maugham, “The Verger,” ***The Complete Short Stories, Vol.II,*** *(Heinemann:London) 1973.*

[Thanks to Gail Jarislowsky for bringing this story to my attention. LS]

National assessment: what it can and cannot do

National assessments cannot inspire institutions to do things very differently from the way they have always done them, and they tend to be irrelevant to classrooms and teachers. But they can create a public discourse and inform discussion of trends and new directions.

These were some of the opinions offered by Rexford Brown, formerly a test developer and report writer with the U.S. National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), currently a researcher, policy analyst and writer for the Education Commission of the States [see Reviews, p. 11]. Brown spoke at Dawson College on January 30 as part of a discussion and information evening on the planned 1993 Canadian School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) being designed by the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC). Because the CMEC representative mistook the date, Dr. Brown became the featured speaker.

Rexford Brown

A rationale for assessment

Rexford Brown starts from the premise that institutions **do** need information to inform themselves about the quality of the work they are doing and to lead to deeper understanding. The trick is get the right kind of information. Most institutions are not getting what they need. They get too much, most of it never used. The biggest problem NAEP has always faced is getting people to use the available assessment information; we tend to forget that people need experience and training to use that information, and resources are rarely available to provide that. We also forget that different groups need different kinds of information.

Questions to ask before designing an assessment.

There are several key questions to ask at the outset of an assessment project.

1. Is it intended to serve an internal or external purpose? Internal implies it is intended to help students; external, to answer rhetorical or political purposes. Either one is fine as long as the developers know the answer. However, Brown suggests, if you want to know about the students, ask teachers. They have the information you want.

2. What do you want to encourage? (centralisation? trust? diversity?). Each of these ends will necessitate a different kind of instrument.

3. How will the information be used? misused? Is it duplicative of information already in existence?

4. What behaviors will be promoted? (obedience? cheating? subversion? individual initiative?) Experience has shown that some incentives will drive institutions to produce exactly what is wanted.

Why do we need system change?

In the 1990s, there is a persistent call for systemic change. The reasons cited are familiar. The student body is more diverse and multi-faceted. With an evolving world economy based on information, demands are growing for a broader critical literacy available to **all** students. The question to be asked: is this new literacy being developed? We find the practice of schooling and the way we organize knowledge in most parts of the world are "out of sync" with what we know about learning. The question: is the system closing the gap? Test scores from individual students will not give us this information.

Assessing students as knowledge workers

Education is the human resource development arm of the new knowledge industry and students are knowledge workers. We need assessment that tells us whether students

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BOX 1

Characteristics of authentic academic achievement

(as measured by professional standards for artists, lawyers, surgeons, engineers, journalists, computer programmers at the National Center for Effective Secondary Schools, University of Wisconsin.)

1. Those being assessed must produce, not just reproduce, knowledge, demonstrating: disciplined inquiry/use of prior knowledge/ in-depth understanding integration/synthesis/procedural knowledge unique to the discipline.
2. Achievement has value beyond its demonstration; there are real consequences (i.e. a lawyer wins a client's acquittal).
3. It requires flexible use of time, not a rigidly timed exercise.
4. It involves collaboration.
5. It involves access to tools and resources
6. It is measured against known performance standards.
7. It uses multiple indicators.
8. It involves human judgement.

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understand their knowledge. Brown counsels educaton to examine the assessments developed in the professional and corporate (Xerox, GM) worlds to evaluate both systems and individual knowledge (see BOX 1). These professional practices provide a standard for anyone developing an assessment.

These assessments are characterized by real demands with real consequences; by access to tools and resources (No one says, "Leave your calculator at home."); by requiring collaboration; and by examining multiple indicators. Look to these for inspiration, says Brown. The time has come to do new things in evaluation, to stop asking for indicators about the past, and to start developing assessments for the future.

What assessment cannot do

There are some guidelines for what good tests should do (see BOX 2). No one assessment can answer all the demands. There will always be divisions among different constituencies about whether there should be large-scale assessments at all. Assessments do not overcome public indifference or confusion; they may in some ways contribute to it. They form only part of a much larger public discourse. When we ask what we want young people to know, we have to recognize that test scores give only a minor, albeit useful, part of the answer.

National data are not good at

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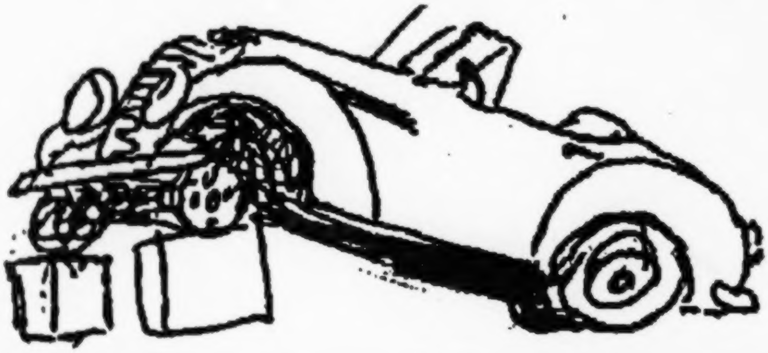

Writer's car up
on his blocks

Reprinted with permission from *Writing on the edge*, Volume 3, Number 1, Fall, 1991.

BOX 2

Setting standards

Tests must:

1. Tell us about quality of performance.
2. Tell us if students understand and apply what they have been taught.
3. Be based on important achievements.
4. Tell us if students can make connections.
5. Tell us about a full range of competencies.
6. Tell us about growth and change.
7. Be fair.
8. Tell us whether some students are not getting a fair shake.
9. Be easy to understand (have face validity).
10. Have construct validity.
11. Be cost-effective.
12. Exemplify what we're asking students to do (i.e. be thoughtful).
13. Be learning experiences.
14. Be examples of, and promote, high quality discourse.

Rexford Brown 1992

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inspiring local change or at driving a quest for quality education. We must acknowledge that national assessments serve several masters, one of them ideology. Everyone will use it to justify whatever purpose they want to use it for. Finally, these assessments will never resolve political debates or moral problems.

That said, assessment is not bad, and concerns are often exaggerated out of proportion. At worst, they are irrelevant, not used, or wasteful of energies better directed elsewhere. There are, however, uses for it . It can give some direction, point out trends over time, and serve as a lightening rod for discussion.

Assigning responsibility

In the end, the most important and the worst assessments are going on in our own classrooms. Brown asserts that there is neither a professional culture nor incentives to spur better classroom assessment that would really tell us what students have learned. He says that as teachers we have to look at our own assessment practices and begin to account to ourselves, to the highest ideals of the profession and of our individual disciplines.

He also calls for more systemic assessment. There should be ways of evaluating the performance of board members, of principals, of central administrations. Much of the blame we attribute to a lack of individual will is misplaced; it belongs with the system. Until we find ways of assessing the largest human resource development system in the world, we will continue asking the wrong questions and looking at the wrong indicators. Brown's closing words: "Bureaucrat, heal thyself!"

[For information on the CMEC Canadian School Indicators Program, contact: Provincial ministry or department of education or CMEC, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON, M5S 1V5, Tel: (416) 964-2551.]

LS.

A videotape of Rexford Brown's presentation is available from The Centre for $12.50, includes postage and handling.

The integrated journal

by Monique Polak

At a workshop I recently gave on "Making the Most of Journals," one of the participants asked an important question which has led to the development of an Integrated Journal project to be conducted at Marionopolis College during the Winter 1992 semester. She asked whether students are in danger of over-dosing on journals — a side effect of the trend encouraging journal responses and reflections across the college curriculum. As well, the new Quebec high school English program emphasizes journal type responses, and even elementary school students, as part of the "whole language" approach, are writing journals. I certainly don't want my students to shrug disdainfully and complain, "Not another Journal, Miss!"

In the workshop, we discussed the possibility of an Integrated Journal in which students could respond to all of their courses in a single journal. And that night, the Marianopolis Integrated Journal Project was "conceived." In a burst of post-ped-day energy, I wrote a memo asking other faculty members whether they would be willing to participate in this project. After all, interesting and important things happen in our own colleges, not just in places like Alverno!

Linking courses

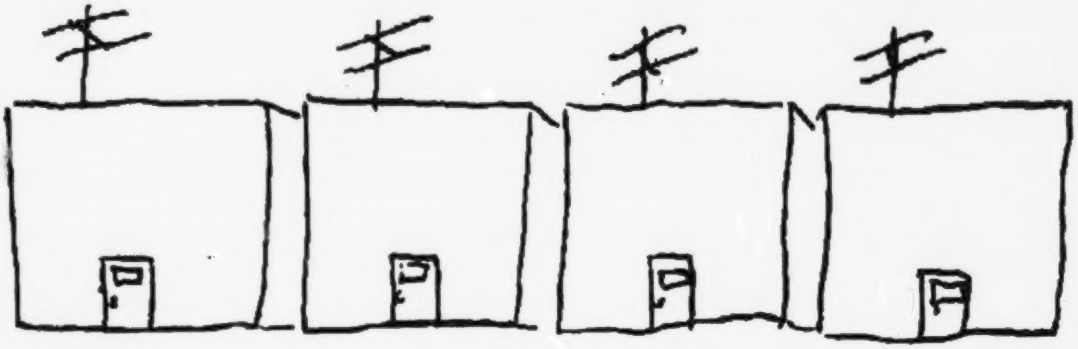
If our students kept an Integrated Journal, they'd be encouraged to see the links among their various courses, and perhaps more importantly, the links between their courses and their own lives. And reading and responding to the Integrated Journals would allow faculty to develop a fuller understanding of what is going on in our own classes. What material do our students find the most difficult? Most interesting? Do they see the point of our courses at all?

So, in a new English course called "Diaries and Letters" which I began teaching as of January 1992, students are required to keep an integrated journal. The journal will consist of a large loose-leaf binder in which students will be asked to reflect upon each of their courses at least once a week. If their professor in physics happens to be one who has opted to participate in the project, he may actually be suggesting a weekly topic. Each entry will be dated and labelled to indicate which course is being commented upon. Teachers may choose to take in a particular entry, or any number of entries and they may or may not choose to assign grades. Students will also be encouraged to write "Read Me" on entries they consider to be particularly important or interesting, and "Don't read this" on entries they wish to remain private. The entire Integrated Journal will be submitted and assigned a grade at the end of the "Diaries and Letters" course. That should keep them writing!

Finally and perhaps most ambitiously, the participating faculty will be asked to keep their own teaching journals, in which they'll reflect, at least once a week, upon each of their classes. We should end up with some interesting information about how our students learn and about how we teach. And if all goes well, I may be able to present Part II of my Journal workshop at next year's Conference.

To be continued...

Monique Polak teaches English at Marianopolis College in Montreal.



A block of writer's blocks reconverted into much-needed low-cost housing facilities

Reprinted with permission from *Writing on the edge*, Volume 3, Number 1, Fall, 1991.

10 REVIEWS

Workplace Literacy, An Introductory Guide for Employers, ABC Canada: Halifax, (1991).

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1
ABC CANADA

With the publication of *Workplace Literacy, An Introductory Guide for Employers*, ABC Canada, the private sector Canadian literacy foundation, has taken a giant step in providing some direction to business. Tucked into the lefthand pocket of a handsome folder, this extraordinarily effective guide manages to present a complex issue in simple terms without being simplistic.

Designed as a series of questions and answers under six headings, it is only nine pages long,but draws on the best current research. The first question sets the tone:
Q: What kind of commitment must I make to improve literacy in my workplace?
A: Literacy in the workplace requires a long-term commitment; there is no quick fix. Literacy skill upgrading should be built into your company's strategic plan. Literacy is not an add on — it must be tied into existing priorities (p2).

There are questions about cost, about assistance, about small businesses, about multicultural awareness, about the need for collaboration between management and union, about educational partners, about needs assessment and types of programs, in short, about almost every concern a business person might have before starting a program.

In the true spirit of a guide, the document is philosophically coherent without being prescriptive. It does not recommend specific programs or methods, but does present general principles: "Successful programs are those that consider both organizational and worker needs."(p.5) There is, however, a clear position on every issue. For example, on needs assessment, it recommends that one first determine how literacy fits into existing organizational and training objectives. Individual assessments should only come much later after employees have agreed to participate. The guide offers a strong rationale against the use of standardized tests — because they do not adequately measure the complex set of skills that enable people to do their jobs, because they measure grade levels which have little relevance to the needs of employees and their workplace, because they can be threatening, and more.

In addition, there is a short list of contacts and a brief annotated bibliography. In the right hand pocket of the folder are six summary cards, snapshots of information on Working for Change, Facts and Figures, Defining Literacy...Dispelling Myths, The First Steps, Key Partnerships, and Making Words Work.

Business people generally claim that, working under intense pressure, they do not have time to read extensive studies and reports. ABC Canada has responded. This first consumer guide to workplace literacy for employers should also please labour and education.
L.S.

continued on page 11

continued from page 10

Schools of Thought: How the Politics of Literacy Shapes Thinking in the Classroom, by Rexford Brown, Jossey-Bass:San Francisco, CA (1991), 290 pp.

This book is a must-read for teachers and policy-makers, but also for parents and for anyone who professes to care about the new "higher-order literacy" that everybody seems to agree ought to be taught today.

A senior policy analyst with the Education Commission of the States, Rexford Brown was director in the late 1980s of a five-year, one-million-dollar grant from the John and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to investigate Policy and the Higher Literacies. The main question was whether the unprecedented amount of educational policy activity since the late 1970s is leading (or is likely to lead) to a literacy of thoughtfulness.

Schools of Thought, a profound and readable study of education, is the compelling record of the extended visits made by Brown and his team of researchers to schools in the United States and Canada.

In the Preface, Brown defines this literacy of thoughtfulness that they were looking for as:

> one that goes beyond basic skills and includes enhanced abilities to think critically and creatively; to reason carefully; to inquire systematically into any important matter; to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and arguments; and to communicate effectively to a variety of audiences in a variety of forms. We have come to call it a literacy of thoughtfulness, since it involves both the exercise of thought and a certain amount of caring about other thinkers in past and present communities. (p.xiii)

REXFORD G. BROWN
Schools of Thought

What distinguishes this book is the quality of the analysis; very few studies combine incisive policy analysis with insight and compassion. Very few analysts choose to present their studies as narratives which Brown has done in seven of the eight chapters. The names and some of the places have been changed "to protect the innocent," but the observations, dialogues, and assessments ring true.

Whether we are in the rural South struggling to close historical racial and socio-economic gaps, or on a native reservation discovering ways to preserve mother-tongue literacy and culture, or at a Toronto school board promoting a forward-looking cross-curricular literacy, we are always watching, listening, and talking to real teachers, principals, and policy-makers attempting to make the best of what they have at hand. Brown watches with a sensitive eye whether he is observing a remarkable teacher or a dismally ineffectual one.

The conclusions are sad and hopeful. Despite finding that most North American schools engage in more "talkinbout" than reading and writing ("because we saw so many people talking about reading but not actually reading, talking about writing but not actually writing.."), Brown nevertheless contends that;

> **We know how to develop a literacy of thoughtfulness.** There are no secrets here. If you want young people to think, you ask them hard questions and let them wrestle with the answers. If you want them to analyze something or interpret it or evaluate it, you ask them to do so and show them how do it with increasing skill. If you want them to know how to approach interesting or difficult problems, you give them interesting or difficult problems and help them develop a conscious repertoire of problem-solving strategies. If you want them to think the way scientists or historians or mathematicians do, you show them how scientists and historians and mathematicians think, and you provide opportunities for them to practice and compare those ways of thinking (p.232).

For every objection voiced by those interviewed about why these things cannot happen in schools, Brown offers a response. It cannot happen without some profound change in attitude and policy, but the fact that it could happen anywhere and is happening in some places corroborates the sense of possibility that informs this book.

Schools of Thought is available at The Centre for Literacy. It can be ordered directly from The Education Commission of the States for US $20.00 plus $3.00 postage and handling. Send a money order to: ECS, 707 17th Street #2700, Denver, CO, 80202-3427.

All profits go to the John and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

[LS]

Resources: Adolescent literacy, at-risk youth, drop-outs

The resources in The Centre for Literacy are catalogued and may be borrowed through inter-library loan at your institution or by mail (postage covered by the borrower). Documents can be consulted in The Centre from Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. If you cannot get in during those hours, special arrangements can be made to leave documents at the Reference Desk in the Dawson College Library, 3040 Sherbrooke Street West, 5th floor.

In addition to the materials listed in the catalogue, we have directories of programs and services, bibliographies on many subjects, international periodicals and newsletters, catalogues of learning materials, tapes/videos, and boxes of newspaper/magazine clippings. We are also connected to the National Adult Literacy Database.

The entire catalogue listing almost 4000 items (as of December 1990) may be ordered for $10.00 or printouts on specific subject headings can be requested at cost. For information, please call Catherine Duncan at (514) 931-8731, local 1415.

Below is a selection of some of the resources listed under the headings noted:

A.

Adolescent literacy, at-risk youth, drop-outs

Center for Early Adolescence. ( ). "Talking With Young Adolescents About School." Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
130/01

Lefstein, Leah. (1986). "A Portrait of Young Adolescents in the 1980's." Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
130/04

Hill, John P. ( ). "Some Perspectives on Adolescence in American Society." Ithaca, New York: Cornell University.
130/05

Scheff-Lipsitz, Joan. (1980). 'The Age Group.' Toward Adolescence: The Middle School Years," Chicago, IL: National Society for the Study of Education.
130/11

Hill, John P. (1980). "Understanding Early Adolescence: A Framework," Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
130/12

National Association of Broadcasters, On-Air Initiatives.(1991). *Focus on Literacy, Part 3: The Dropouts.*

Literacy Assistance Center. (1990)."Youth and Literacy: A Critical Issues Paper." New York: Literacy Assistance Center.
130/14

Sticht, Thomas G. et al. (1987).*Cast-Off Youth: Policy and Training Methods From the Military Experience*, New York: Praeger.
130/17

Reingold and Associates, Inc. (1989). "Current Federal Policies and Programs for Youth." Washington, DC: Youth and America's Future: The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship. 130/22

Wetzel, James R. (1989). "American Youth: A Statistical Snapshot," Washington, DC: Youth and America's Future: The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship.
130/23

Venezky, Richard L., Carl F. Kaestle, Andrew M. Sum. (1987). *The Subtle Danger: Reflections on the Literacy Abilities of America's Young Adults.* Princeton, NJ: Center for Assessment of Educational Testing. 130/28

Lipsitz, Joan, (Ed.). (1979). *Barriers: A New Look at the Needs of Young Adolescents.* New York: Ford Foundation.
130/29

Lipsitz, Joan. (1984). *Successful Schools for Young Adults.* New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
130/30

Lipsitz, Joan. (1980). *Growing Up Forgotten: A Review of Research and Programs Concerning Early Adolescence.* New Jersey: Transaction Books.
130/31

Dorman, Gayle. (1987). "Improving Middle-Grade Schools: A Framework for Action," Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
130/32

Atwell, Nancie. (1987). *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning With Adolescents.* New Jersey: Boynton/Cook. 130/33

Kirsch, Irwin S., Ann Jungeblut. (1986). *Literacy: America's Young Adults.* Princeton, NJ: National Assessment of Educational Progress.
130/36

Camp, Catherine. (1980). "School Dropouts: A Discussion Paper." Alexandria, VA: Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 191 959.
270/01

Murphy, Helen Campbell, and Julie Cool.(1991). *Dropping Out and Dropping In: A Study of Youth and Literacy.* Ottawa: Canadian Youth Foundation.

Structured Employment/Economic Development Corporation. (1987). *What To Do About Youth Dropouts?: A Summary of Solutions.* New York, NY: SEEDCO.
270/03

George, Rosemary. (1987). *Youth Policies and Programs in Selected Countries.* Washington, DC: Youth and America's Future: The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship.
270/04

Thomas, Audrey M. (1990). "The Reluctant Learner." Victoria, BC: Ministry of Advanced Education.
270/06

Policy Information Center. (1990). "From School to Work," Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
270/07

B.

A listing from the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) of Canadian projects, programs, and materials related to at-risk youth and literacy. This list can also be accessed directly from NALD by subscribers. To obtain information about NALD, call (519) 452-4446 or FAX (519) 451-8831.

☐ I would like to order ___ resource catalogue(s) from The Centre for Literacy at $10.00 ea.

☐ I would like to receive an update of the catalogue (December 1991) at $3.00 ea.
(Prices include postage, and handling).

I enclose a cheque/money order for __________. Please mail to:

Name: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________

City: ______________ Province/State __________ Postal/Zip Code __________

Minority language coalition defines its vision

Literacy Partners of Quebec, Quebec's minority language coalition, held a team-building event at Dawson College on December 3 and 4 1991. Twenty-eight people, representing member organizations including school boards, reading councils, universities, colleges and a variety of community organizations, came together to define a vision and statement of purpose(see BOX). They also struck a constitution sub-committee to incorporate Literacy Partners and to research models of coalitions across Canada.

The coalition decided to devote its energies to increasing public awareness of the literacy needs of the community. It will highlight prevention issues that relate to family, school and community, build partnerships with social and health services, community organizations and business and labour, and lobby and advocate for good literacy practices.

In conjunction with The Centre for Literacy, the coalition will establish a clearinghouse that will receive and disseminate information on human and material resources, services and training.

One of its first endeavours is continued development of the coalition. A project for 1992 will reach out to regional members to support information sharing and to promote coordination of community resource networks. The coalition met on February 28, 1992, to plan the outreach project and to discuss models for a constitution.

Literacy Partners of Quebec: Vision statement

Preamble

Literacy is a human right. (U.N. Resolution). It gives individuals, regardless of age, the ability to function in their own environments, allowing for the growth and development of their human potential within a learning culture.

Vision

Our vision of the minority language coalition is one that supports good English language literacy practices by reaching out to individuals, groups and organizations across Quebec, thereby increasing collaboration. It is inclusive, promoting the sharing of and equal access to resources, information and expertise. Literacy Partners is committed to consensus in its decision-making process.

Statement of purpose

Literacy Partners of Quebec is a coalition devoted to developing and supporting a network of groups representing literacy students, literacy providers, policy-makers, community and business leaders and other interested groups, and to maximizing the collective effort of the partners.

Feminists literacy workers network chainletter

The Feminists Literacy Workers Network has been created to allow women to begin to talk to each other across Canada about their work in literacy. The network started with a number of wandering books that were sent out to women who had expressed interest in the network at the Literacy 2000 conference in Vancouver(October 1990). In these books, women literacy workers are writing about their experience as women, their thoughts and feelings about their work.

A steering committee, formed in February 1991with support from the CCLOW , have begun a chainletter designed to draw more women into the network. They define a literacy worker as someone doing work in literacy not necessarily in a program and necessarily a paid staff person.

If you are interested in becoming involved in the chainletter, send your name and address to Aisla Thomas at CCLOW, 47 Main Street, Toronto, ON, M4E 2V6, TEL: (416) 699-1909.

Canadian Literacy Thesaurus Forthcoming

The first edition of the Canadian Literacy Thesaurus/Thesaurus canadian d'alphabétisation will be available in June 1992. The thesaurus lists 3400 terms (1700 in each language) that are commonly used by literacy specialists in Canada. It is expected to facilitate the exchange of literacy-related information across Canada and provide precise subject access to collections of materials in the field. Information: The Canadian Literacy Thesaurus Coalition, c/o Alpha Ontario, 21 Park Road, Toronto, Ontraio, M5W 2N1, FAX:(416) 397-5915.

Disabled protected in U.S.

The United States passed a comprehensive civil rights law in 1991(effective in 1992) to protect the disabled from discrimination in employment, public services and accommodations, and telecommunications. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) covers schooling provisions for the learning disabled. Public schools must provide special education where required; but even private schools are required to "take whatever steps

continued on page 14

continued from page 13

are reasonable to accommodate qualified disabled students." For information on ADA and its effects on independent schools, write: NAIS, 11 Dupont Circle, #210, Washington, D.C. 20036, TEL:(202) 265-3500.

Call for papers
Dimensions of literacy in a multicultural society
Keynote: Henry Giroux
October 2 - 4, 1992
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec
Deadline: May 1, 1992.
Information: GEMS, (514) 485-0855.
Note: the deadline has been extended to May 1.

McGill writing seminars 1992
free admission
Rhetoric, innovation and technology: The social, economic,cultural, and reserach implications of studying writing in organizations
Stephen Doheny-Farina
Clarkson University
Friday, April 3, 1992
9:00 -11:00 a.m.
Faculty of Education
3700 McTavish
Information: 938-6960.

Tutor training

one week intensive
June 15 -19, 1992
An outstanding, reearch-based model of training developed in Nova Scotia with support fromthe National Literacy Secretariat.
First time offered in Quebec
Registration limited to 20
Information:
(514) 931-8731,
local 1415.

A chance to react —

The Task Force Report:
The Future of English Education in Quebec

The Quebec Association for Adult Learning (QAAL) has organized a panel and open discussion on the recent report tabled by The Task Force on English Education in Quebec

Date: Saturday, April 25, 1992
Place: Dawson College, Room 5B-16
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Lunch and breaks provided.
Information on registration & fee: (514) 848-2036.

The Centre for Literacy

announces

Literacy: A Summer Institute

June 29 -July 10, 1992
Montreal, Quebec

Collaborative learning supported
by resources and expertise
Backdrop: summer in Montreal
— Jazzfest and city's 350th birthday

What past participants have said:

- "Challenged me to consider new models."
- "Although the institute had a focus on adult literacy, I have acquired insight inot literacy acrossthe curriculum for secondary students."
- "Very effective atmosphere – was safe and comfortable and learning took place. People really felt the power of collaboration."

Registration limited: 15

For information: write The Centre for Literacy, 3040 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec, H3Z 1A4; or call (514) 931-8731; or FAX (514) 931-5181.

Local Conferences

4e colloque annuel de l'association pour la recherche au collégial
La recherche au collégial
"Des réalisations, un avenir"
19 - 20, mars, 1992
Cégep de Trois-Rivières
Trois-Rivières, Québec

Springboards '92
Annual Conference of Association of Teachers of English in Quebec & Quebec Reading Association
"Contexts for Learning"
April 7, 1992
Palais des congrès, Montreal

Alphabétisation d'aujourd'hui et demain
May 13 -15, 1992
Hotel Renaissance Ramada
Montreal, Quebec

Canadian Home and School Federation
Annual Conference: Science, Technology, and Education
"Literacy in the information age"
May 24, 1992
The Grand Hotel
Montreal, Quebec

The Annual Conference of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges in cooperation with the Fédération des cégeps and AQPC
May 24 - 28, 1992
Montreal, Quebec

Chronological Conference Listing

College Composition and Communication Annual Conference
"Contexts, Communities, and Constraints"
March 19 -21, 1992
Cincinnati, OH

Adult Basic Education Association of British Columbia
"Co-operation in Adult Education: It's Time to Work Together"
April 1 - 4, 1992
Harrison Hot Springs Hotel
Information: Marilee Schelp Tel: (604) 324-2414; FAX (604) 324-9476

National Center for Family Literacy
First National Conference on Family Literacy
April 12 -14, 1992
Chapel Hill, NC
Information: National Center for Family Literacy, Louisville KY, Tel: (502) 584-1133

Canadian Council of Teachers of English
April 29 - May 3, 1992
Banff Alberta

Inkshed 9
"Textual Practices: Problems and Possibilities"
Banff, Alberta
May 3 - 6, 1992

8th Conference on Computers and Writing
"Building Community"
May 1 - 3, 1992
Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis

International Reading Association Preconference Institute
"Investigating Adult Literacy: Research Updates"
May 3, 1992
Orlando, FL

"Learning to Build Communities"
Whistler, B.C.
May 10 -12, 1992
For adult educators, community development officers, correctional educators, educational administators, literacy instructors, Native project workers, policymakers, workplace teachers.

The Second North American Conference on Media Education
"Constructing Culture: Media Education in the 1990s"
May 13 -15, 1992
University of Guelph

1992 Adult Education Research Conference
May 15 -17, 1992
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, SK, Canada

1992 Conference on Newspapers in Education and Literacy
May 20 - 22, 1992
San Franscisco, CA

Computers Across the Curriculum
A Conference on Technology in the Freshman Year
May 29 - 31, 1992
New York Marriott
New York City

Association of Departments of English (ADE)
Summer Seminars - Midwest
June 18 -21, 1992
Waterloo University
Waterloo, Ontario
Summer Seminars - East
July 9 -12, 1992
Penn State University

Writing in Engineering Design
June 24 - 26, 1992
Michigan Technological University
Houghton, Michigan

Writing Program Administration (WPA) Workshop
July 20 -23, 1992
University of Denver

(WPA) Conference
"Relevant Research in the '90's"
July 23 -25, 1992
Denver, Colorado

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Call for Proposals
Deadline: April 1, 1992
New Directions in Portfolio Assessment
October 2 - 4, 1992
Miami University
Oxford Ohio 45056

The 12th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Educational Reform
"Cultivating the reasoning mind: Teaching, testing, standards, and assessment
August 9 -12, 1992
Sonoma State University
Rohnert park, CA
Information: (707) 664-2940.

1992 Society for Literature and Science
October 8 - 11, 1992
Atlanta, Georgia

Bard College Workshops
May 1-3, 1992
Writing and Thinking; Writing to Learn; Inquiry into Essay; Writing to Teach Math and Science; Visual Thinking: The Language of Seeing; Language: Power and Play

April 10, 1992
Conference:
"Language and Gender in the Classroom"
Simon's Rock
(Great Barrington, MA)

July 3-17
Week-long workshops in:
Writing and Thinking; Writing and Thinking in the Middle School; Writing to Learn; Inquiry into Essay; Narrative Thinking; Visual Thinking; Teaching Poetry: Reading and Writing; Language: Power and Play; Writing Retreat for Teachers.

Please note: *Workshops are concurrent; participants in weekend and week-long workshops register for* ONE WORKSHOP ONLY.

August 1992: Ten-day Advanced Workshop in Teaching Language and Thinking (concurrent with Bard Freshman Workshop in Language &Thinking). Dates to be announced.

1992 Annual Conference American Association for Adult and Continuing Education
"Achieving Competence in an Uncertain World"
November 4 - 6, 1992
Anaheim, CA

Modern Language Association 1992
December 27 -30, 1992
New York, N.Y.
Details on all listings available from The Centre for Literacy, (514) 931-8731, local 1415.

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Multiple subscription (20)	**$85.00**

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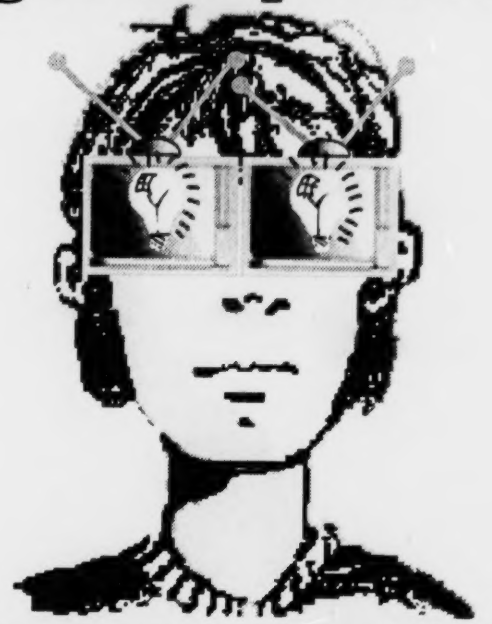
VOL 2 No. 1

Medi
FOCUS

THE CENTRE FOR LITERACY

Exploding a myth: TV watching is *not* passive

by Winston Emery



What the critics say

Contentions made by critics of the media about TV's negative effects on the behaviour and thought processes of children persistently nag at educators who advocate serious classroom study of television by children and adolescents.

The Plug-In Drug by Marie Winn provides a barrage of research evidence and rhetoric to convince us that TV undermines family life and destroys children's capacity for independent thought. Watching TV, according to Winn, retards the development of the brain, blunts the senses and encourages mental laziness. It impairs children's linguistic ability, attention span, and sense of their own identity. Further, because of their addiction to TV, children spend less time in the (necessary) interpersonal daily rituals of family life as well as at play, which develops the imagination.

Neil Postman argues similarly in *The Disappearance of Childhood*, that TV is principally responsible for blurring the distinction between adulthood and childhood, and for adults' inability to keep 'secrets' from children and protect them from (bad) adult ways. Thus, children have begun to dress like adults and vice versa, are generally more ill-mannered than they used to be, use foul language, have sex earlier and participate in social unrest and crime at an earlier age.

Critics like Ms. Winn and Mr. Postman assume that TV viewing:

- has a direct cause/effect relationship with the viewer.
- is essentially a passive activity for the viewer whose mind is not challenged, but open to considerable manipulation.
- dupes young viewers by the techniques and modes of discourse. Because they watch TV passively and uncritically, they are ripe for inculcation of the base values and anti-social behaviour which TV regularly purveys.

What the research supports

Despite Winn's appeal to research, actual research into the direct effects of TV on audience behaviour has been largely inconclusive. This is also true of studies on violence, about which the public and many educators have been in a moral quandary for some time.

Some recent research into audience behaviour call into question Winn's notion of viewing as a passive activity and Postman's position that young people are being duped by the medium. The work of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Does commercial advertising belong in the classroom?
Two views on Youth News Network (YNN).
page 5

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Hodge and Tripp (1986), Sefton-Green (1990), and Buckingham (1987, 1989, 1990), has shown that many of the negative premises are faulty.

Hodge and Tripp studied how groups of Australian children (ages 6-12) watched a cartoon show and what they observed about it. Buckingham and Sefton-Green concentrated on how children's interpretations of TV are established in small-group talk. The studies looked at children's and adolescents' (ages 7-17) responses to popular drama and situation comedies.

These studies confirmed:
- that children are usually active and powerful decoders of TV programs [see BOX 1].
- that the programs they watch are rich in meaning and cultural value [see BOX 2].

All the children interviewed by Hodge and Tripp displayed a solid understanding of the narrative structure of the TV programs they talked about. All were able to distinguish between the real world and the fantasy world of TV; all were aware of the fact that techniques were employed by the makers of the program to convince them of the verisimilitude of the TV presentation.

In the discussion reproduced in BOX 2, the students demonstrate fairly sophisticated readings of the moral issues raised by the program, *EastEnders*. They often test the reality of the moral dilemma and the responses of the characters of the program against the reality of their own world. Although they seemingly make some of their judgments within the logic of the fictional world in *EastEnders*, they are, at the same time, fully aware of its construction as a TV program (N.B. Calista's comment that the producers will probably adopt a particular story line in order to keep the ratings up).

In many ways the responses in these studies point to the inadequacies of the views offered by the Winns and Postmans of the world. The young viewers were clearly not dupes of TV, passively absorbing its influence. They were aware that the programs they were watching were constructed. There was no confusion in their minds between the represented world of TV and the real world. Viewers, while they enjoy these programs and identified with the characters in them, were, at the same time, critical of the programs' partiality to a particular view of the world and the implausibility of some of the scenarios and actions of the characters. Indeed, as Buckingham (1991) notes of the viewers of *EastEnders*, "...they displayed a considerable degree of critical distance."

Finally, the diversity of responses to the programs was striking: readings of the ideological messages contained within the program ranged from sympathetic to negotiated to oppositional. It appeared that the ways in which the viewers made sense of TV programs were dependent not merely on the TV texts themselves, but also on the knowledge and experiences the viewers brought to them.

This is hardly surprising to those of us who have been using "response to literature" approaches in our classrooms. (Young) readers of TV, just as readers of literature do, reconstruct the text (TV program) at the efferent and aesthetic levels. Thus, readings will vary from individual to individual.

This is not to say that TV does not influence the behaviour of young viewers, but that the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

BOX 1

Children's ability to decode TV

What follows is an excerpt from a conversation between a researcher and George, age 6. They are talking about the kinds of things that happen to people on TV.

GEORGE: Um, Zoltaire gets in G. Force and then his robot, he's got that, then he gets 'em and they grow small and they lie down, then they just jump down their heap again.

INTERVIEWER: So does that sort of thing happen in life?

GEORGE: (Shakes his head)

INTERVIEWER: What about if somebody gets killed on television?

GEORGE: Um...They're not really killed.

INTERVIEWER: They're not really killed on television?

GEORGE: They're just pretend bullets and they just pretend they're killed and they all get dead on purposely.

INTERVIEWER: I see...and what happens in life when somebody gets killed?

GEORGE: Um...they die.

(Hodge and Tripp, 1986, p.112)

Media Focus is published four times/year as a supplement to *Literacy Across the Curriculum*.

Supplement editor: Judy Brandeis

All Articles/Events/Ideas welcome.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

influence is far more complex than the simple cause/effect model proposed by the alarmists, who make a direct connection between TV viewing and violent, sexual and other "deviant" behaviour.

For media literacy educators, one positive finding of the research was that the young people studied expressed considerable curiosity about how TV messages are constructed. For this reason, Hodge and Tripp conclude that "[t]he school is a site where TV should be thoroughly understood and drawn into the curriculum in a variety of ways." (p.218).

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Postman, N. (1983). *The Disappearance of Childhood*, London: W.H. Allen.

Sefton-Green, J. (1990). "Teaching and learning about representation: culture and The Cosby Show in a North London comprehensive," in Buckingham.

Winn, M. (1985). *The Plug-in Drug*, Hammondsworth: Penguin (revised edition).

***Winston Emery**, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, McGill University, is a visiting fellow to the University of London, Institute of Education, where he is investigating how media education is being studied in teacher training and implemented at the secondary school level.*

BOX 2

Making meaning from TV

David Buckingham's interviews with adolescents point to the active and sophisticated ways in which they view TV. The following transcript is taken from a discussion among five seventeen year-olds about *EastEnders*, a British soap opera.

CALISTA: Michelle, in a way, is not the perfect teenager, is she?

SANDRA: She's very selfish anyway.

CALISTA: I think that's why she's using Lofty.

SHEILA: She won't listen to anybody's advice. Her mum and her nan and her dad tried to sit down, tried to get to the clinic with her and she just didn't want to know. She just wanted to keep herself to herself, and now she wants Lofty to take the burden off her....

CALISTA: When she first found out she was pregnant, it was 'Oh gran, I'm pregnant, Oh gran, help!' or whatever, and then all of a sudden, it was 'my baby, my life, I'm going to do what I want to'...

SHEILA: Her mum's got a lot of burden, right. She's just not taking her mum into consideration. Her mum has to go through a lot. Now supposing something happens to that baby, or if it dies or whatever, who's going to have to look after Michelle, to try and get her out of it? Her mum. Now when she wants to go out to parties, who's going to look after that child? Her mum. Everything falls on the mum, I reckon. Even though it's her baby, she's got her mum, she's got her gran, she's got her dad, she's got people around her to help her. Other people haven't got that, they're just there by themselves, they usually get chucked out or something.

CALISTA: She's got to take the other people around her into consideration. I mean, it is her baby, it is her body, it is her life, but these other people, she's living with them, and they're the ones who've got to bear the brunt of whatever is happening. She's going to have this baby, and she's too young to have a baby, anyway.

DONNA: She's under age now, isn't she? She's still under parent's guard....

SHEILA: I think it was wrong that she didn't tell her parents who the father is. Any parent is going to find out. Any parent is going to drag it out of them. I mean, your parents know you better than anybody does. I think that the father should have the right to know. I mean, it would bring out more in Eastenders, wouldn't it?

CALISTA: I suppose they're saving it really, to use later on. And if their ratings go down, then they're going to use that to pick up their ratings.

SANDRA: I read somewhere that they're going to name the baby Victoria and then everyone's going to start saying 'Aha! Victoria! It must be Den! (Laughter)

DONNA: That's what it said, it's going to get some tongues wagging...

SANDRA: But all the time, she keeps dropping hints. Like when she heard about Jan coming down to the pub, she sat down and started crying. I mean things like that, you you would pick up these little pieces and start putting it all together. And I reckon Lofty should know who the father is. He should demand to know.

CALISTA: Think about it though; why did Den give them that engagement ring? All these things! If it was me, I'd start thinking 'Why is he giving me this ring?"

RODNEY: But Lofty's stupid in the first place! (Laughter)

(Buckingham, 1987, pp. 171-172)

WORLD VIEW ON MEDIA EDUCATION

Focus on England

Television Literacy Research Project, Institute of Education, University of London, London, England

In 1989, the Economic and Social Research Council funded a two-year research project by David Buckingham, Valerie Hey and Gemma Moss on "The Development of Television Literacy in Middle Childhood and Adolescence," which studied the development of children's (ages 7-11) competencies as television viewers.

Although the relationship between children and television has been researched and debated over the last 30 years in Britain and elsewhere, the agenda has continued to be quite limited. Children are still often regarded as passive receivers on whom television imposes its harmful messages.

Only recently have some researchers and educators begun to reconsider basic questions about how children process the medium. New approaches derived from semiotics and discourse analysis have prepared the ground for a more complex account of the role of television in children's lives.

This project, primarily qualitative, concentrated on the ways in which children's interpretations of television are established and negotiated in small-group talk. It also looked at the role of social class, gender and ethnic background in determining children's understanding and use of the medium.

The study looked at development of children's conceptions of television genres and narrative forms; their judgments about the ways in which television represents the social world; and their understanding of the processes of television productions, aspects that have largely been neglected or underestimated.

Professor Buckingham is completing a book based on the research, due out in Fall of 1992.

Media Education: An Introduction. A new pack produced by the British Film Institute and The Open University

In their attempt to accommodate the growing number of people who want media education training, BFI Education and the Open University have joined forces to prepare a distance learning pack which offers a thorough and accessible introduction to the subject. This pack is designed for teachers who realize the importance of a firm grounding in basic principles and strategies of media education.

Media Education: An Introduction contains substantial theoretical material; however, its pedagogy is firmly rooted in the student-centered approach. It begins with the student's direct response to media texts and insists that media education must start from the student's own understanding. The pack is not structured around a series of theories, but around classroom teaching; not just upon what you ought to teach, but also upon what children might learn.

The pack of material, available in Spring 1992 contains: Workbook, Video Tape, Audio Tape, Slides, Course Reader (352 pp.). The cost is expected to be approximately £70.

For more information:
Barbara Mayor, School of Education, The Open University, Milton, Keynes, 6AA, ENGLAND.

Review

Choosing the News, compiled by The English and Media Centre, London, 10 student booklets and Teacher's Notes, £8.25

reviewed by Winston Emery

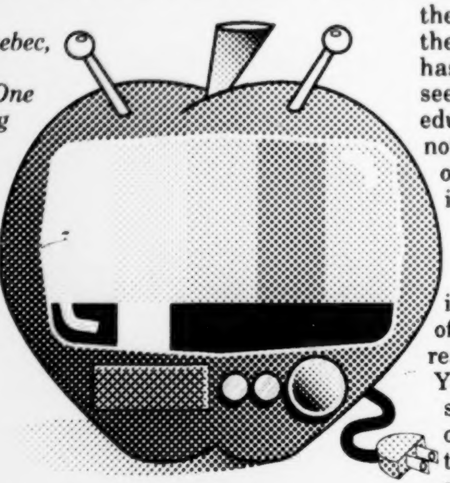
The English and Media Centre, formerly of the ILEA (Inner London Educational Authority), and now a separate group, has produced *Choosing the News*. Designed for junior secondary or senior elementary school students, it is a unit on teaching about how the news is selected and constructed.

This teaching package provides each pupil with the raw material from which an editor would make up a front page of the newspaper: news stories, pictures, headlines. Students are to choose which stories and pictures will be on the page, and what the stance of the paper is vis-a-vis the story, i.e. what view point and

continued on page 8

Commercial advertising — does it have a place in the classroom?

Two views on Youth News Network (YNN)



As interest in media education grows in Quebec, new issues and controversies emerge. One of the issues now facing Quebec's educators, parents and professionals is whether commercial television news programming, as proposed by Youth News Network (YNN), belongs in the classroom.

YNN, developed by former CFCF broadcaster, Rod MacDonald, is modelled largely on Whittle Communication's Channel One, a commercial video service being shown in some U.S. schools. MacDonald's service — like Whittle's — includes equipment and news programming with the stipulation that part of the daily 12-minute classroom broadcast be two minutes of commercial advertising.

Reaction to the project has been mixed. ***Media Focus*** *has invited the comments below which represent two distinct positions on the place of YNN in Quebec schools. They are reprinted as written and express the opinions of the authors.* [JB]

YNN - YES!

Lee Rother

Those who reject YNN speculate that it is an intrusion into the educational system. YNN is still in its formative stages and there are many educational and commercial issues still evolving. It should be pointed out that YNN is developing an advisory board of active teachers, academics and media specialists who, according to the producers, will establish guidelines and advise program executives on commercial and editorial content.

Any debate about YNN must begin with an understanding that education is not a neutral institution, but rather, part of a larger industrial structure, acknowledging that YNN and education are both part of this larger society. Obviously, this is ideologically problematic to education's traditional approach to maintaining stability. In YNN's case, it seems to have become the basis for much cynicism and pessimism.

While the position taken by many of those who oppose YNN's commercial content may be virtuous, it ignores the opportunity for students to receive information in a form that they may actually accept. Most who oppose the initial thought of the ads are the same who would accept them if YNN is of benefit to the students. Since YNN has yet to be broadcast, it seems difficult to judge its educational value. Does it not deserve at least the opportunity to prove itself?

The producers have agreed to an independent evaluation of the program within a reasonable time frame. If YNN is pedagogically successful, those who oppose the ads will have the means to provide students with a real education by developing critical thought on the issues presented and on the ads. Those who accept the validity of YNN but still reject the ads will have to find alternative ways of supporting such a project. If YNN is to be rejected based on corporate sponsorship, we had better take a closer look at many of the materials and activities now in our schools as well as at the political economy of schooling.

Undoubtedly, YNN provides a wealth of issues that have far-reaching educational and social consequences. To try and debate each of these in the space provided would be grossly simplistic. YNN is simply a text that can act as a source for reading and analysis. As such, YNN is an opportunity to help students become actors in the economy rather than mere consumers as well as to influence the business community to take some form of moral action in education. Those of us in education must begin to realize that TV and commercialism are here to stay. It is not a matter of print text vs. TV text, but a broadening of the concept of literacy to include all modes of communication, as suggested by the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

The Centre for Literacy

announces
a
ONE- DAY
WORKSHOP

Teaching the Media
with
LEN MASTERMAN
(Nottingham University)

DATE:
Tuesday,
May 19, 1992

Registration limited.

For information/
registration forms,
please call:

(514) 931-8731,
Local 1415
FAX:
(514) 931-5181

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Ministry of Education Quebec Language Arts guidelines.

We have three choices. We can be cynical about our ability to influence commercial enterprise in education. We can take the easy way out by tolerating and complaining about TV and commercialism as evil art forms, thus alienating ourselves. We can take some form of calculated action that just may encourage taking dominant culture forms like TV journalism and advertising and mobilizing it into attempts at cultural analysis. This need not be a complicated task directed by media specialists, as some teachers feel. We must merely ask ourselves whether we are ready to accept a critical pedagogy that responds to, rather than resists, present cultural structures.

Lee Rother is a teacher, with the Laurenval School Board, Montreal, Quebec

YNN - NO!

Dorothy Nixon

"First of all, I don't think that anyone could claim to be media literate if he or she didn't understand that one of the principle functions of commercial media is not so much the provision of information or entertainment, but the segmentation and packaging of audiences for delivery and sale to advertisers."
—*Len Masterman*

"We want our secondary students to be media literate," says Mike Kornecook of the Laurenval School Board, explaining why he has chosen to allow YNN into five of his high schools.

But, the purpose of media literacy is to encourage critical thinking about the media. It is not to create good consumers of the future, as Françoise Achim of Ecole Royal George, of the South Shore Protestant Regional School Board, stated in *La Presse* (Oct. 13, 1991). And it's not to teach current events, as Rod MacDonald of YNN seems to believe when he rationalizes the need for YNN by claiming that, statistically, few children watch any news at all. Breadth is the key word in media literacy. To be media literate, one must analyze all aspects of the media—print, radio and TV—not to mention advertising and the many other facets of popular culture.

Will students be encouraged to deconstruct and evaluate the YNN reports themselves, comparing YNN's version to the CBC's or CNN's or to the newspaper? Will students be taught how advertising influences the content of media, even YNN, and encouraged to analyze the techniques YNN's advertisers have implemented in order to influence them?

A news junkie myself, I thought YNN was a good idea until I reflected upon it, a skill I didn't pick up from the electronic news media. Providing a captive audience with one, and only one, source of news isn't enlightenment; it's propaganda. There has to be a better way to teach media literacy in the schools; perhaps starting with the old fashioned kind of literacy—the one that encourages a certain breadth of knowledge and promotes critical thinking skills in thoughtful individuals.

Dorothy Nixon is a broadcaster with Mediawatch, a public interest group in Montreal.

BOX

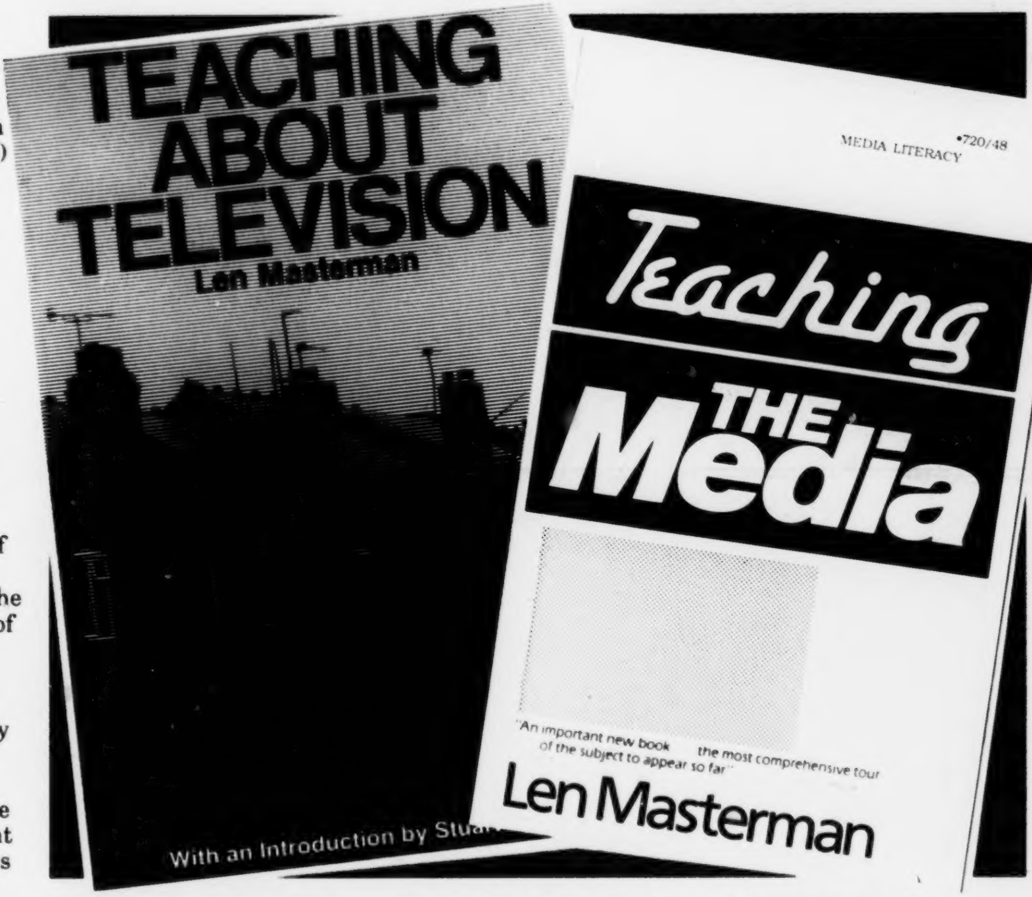
"Tuning in on current events": A survey

A recent study conducted by Southeastern Educational Improvement Laboratory, Durham, North Carolina, indicates that commercial television news programming in the classroom does not necessarily increase high school students' knowledge of current events. Results are based on a 1990 survey of 3,000 high school students and 140 teachers in 51 schools in Mississippi and North Carolina.

Among the findings:
- Students who watched CNN Newsroom and Channel One were no more informed about current events than those who did not watch the programs.
- Students in classrooms where teachers integrate video instruction into lessons learn more.
- Traditional advertising already permeates schools—prior to the use of Channel One.
- Few teachers use the program's commercials as material for critical viewing.
- Students report that they believe products advertised in school are good for them.
- Students who read the newspaper are more informed than those who receive the news from TV. However, the reality is that 80% of students surveyed watch TV news more than twice a week and only 50% of them read the newspaper more than twice a week; 50% of these students watch more than 3 hours of TV on school nights and over 20% watch more than 5 hours on school nights.

Reprinted from ***Strategies*** (Fall, 1991, Vol. 4, No. 4), Strategies for Media Literacy: San Francisco, CA.

Reviews


TEACHING ABOUT TELEVISION
Len Masterman
With an Introduction by Stu
MEDIA LITERACY
•720/48
Teaching THE Media
"An important new book ... the most comprehensive tour of the subject to appear so far"
Len Masterman

Teaching the Media, by Len Masterman, Comedia Publishers (London, 1989) 268 pp.

Teaching about Television, by Len Masterman, Macmillan Education Ltd. (London, 1980) 189 pp.

reviewed by Michael Thomas

No one can hope to make sense of the world of the nineties unless s/he understands the nature of the media by which we interpret it. Not only do the media claim a large part of our time, but they also claim considerable influence on the way we think and act, particularly on the way we buy and vote. So it is hardly surprising that a body like UNESCO urges competent authorities in all countries to "initiate and support comprehensive media education programs" and that many nations require attention to media in their curricula.

[Quebec teachers find that requirement in the official Ministry of Education Secondary English Language Arts and Fine Arts program documents, and if media education remains marginal in most schools, it may be that teachers still are not sure how to deal with it.]

Enter Len Masterman. A lecturer in Education at Nottingham University after years of teaching in British primary, comprehensive and grammar schools, he has produced in these two volumes the most comprehensive rationale and theoretical framework for media studies that teachers could ask for, and a primer on teaching about British television that makes rewarding reading for teachers in any culture.

In *Teaching the Media*, Masterman's posture is essentially defensive, in the best tradition of Freierian empowerment and McLuhan's advocacy of "civil defence against media fallout." The aim is to prepare students "to apply critical judgments to media texts" that they encounter now and for the rest of their lives. Most of the book is devoted to elucidating a set of "core concepts" that Masterman believes students must understand in order to develop this critical autonomy.

Many of these concepts are already engraved on every English teacher's heart (genre, rhetoric, realism, naturalism, denotation and connotation, discourse, myth, narrative structure, code, sources...). The approach is basically rhetorical, but with special emphasis on the originators of the messages, figures of power dealt with under the heading of "Determinants." Canadian followers of Masterman will find this part of the program heavier going than British teachers for whom he has compiled a large annotated bibliography and appendices of resources, including information on media conglomerates. But there is no reason why local media education organizations cannot prepare a similar resource.

Teaching About Television supplies, on familiar theoretical foundations sketched in the first two chapters, a solid program of classroom exercises designed to develop "teleliteracy", from introductory exercises in perception to detailed lesson plans for the analysis of cultural codes in televised football games. There are also good materials on TV cartoons, music programs and the news.

Throughout both texts, Masterman calls for the enhancement of social, political and aesthetic awareness through media studies across the curriculum.

Heed that call, and it will change your teaching life.

Michael Thomas is Senior Language Arts Consultant at the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal.

Profile: Len Masterman

Vast teaching experience, and extensive travel and research make Len Masterman one of the most influential media educators of our time. Described by the *Times Educational Supplement* as "a gifted and genuinely educative teacher," Masterman is best known in Canada for three books—*Teaching about Television*, *Teaching the Media* (see Reviews), and *Television Mythologies: Stars, Shows, Signs* (editor) — out of a lengthy list of publications.

Masterman's influence is international. His work has been disseminated in fourteen countries, and his approach to media education has been endorsed by UNESCO and the Council of Europe. As European liaison editor of Media Information Australia, that country's leading media journal, Masterman regularly receives the most recent literature from Europe, the U.S. and Australia which he makes available to his students.

Len Masterman will spend a day in Montreal in May.

Perspectives on Media Education

Tuesday, May 19, 1992
Time: 9:00 - 4:00

Session one:
New approaches to teaching advertising and marketing

Session two:
Teaching documentary

Session three:
Teaching media literacy

For details/registration forms:
(514) **931-8731, local 1415.**

Selected New Resources

The Media Education Journal, Autumn, 1991, No. 11 features a fascinating look at Twin Peaks by Rick Instrell. His article presents theoretical observations about the cult series and suggestions for teaching it. The issue also includes overviews of media education in Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, the Netherlands, and France. These articles are interesting not only for what they say about media education in these countries, but also for providing a basis for comparison among different national programs.

Conferences, events

12th Annual Summer Institute of Film and Television
June 14 - 19, 1992
Algonquin College
Ottawa, ON
Topics include: writing scripts for children's TV; adapting your prose and talents to screen stories; comedy-writing; documentaries and non-theatrical videos.
Information: Tel: (613) 598-4530;
FAX: (613) 598-4531.

National Council of Teachers of English
Conference on Media and Language Arts
June 26 -28, 1992
Annenberg Center
University of Pennsylvania
Keynote: George Gerbner, Dean Emeritus
Annenberg School of Communications

Melodrama: An International Conference and Festival
British Film Institute
July 5 - 11, 1992
London, England
Information: Alpa Patel, Education Dept., British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P1PL.

Australian Teachers of Media
7th Annual National Media Education Conference 1992
"Facing the Future"
October 1 - 4, 1992
Perth, Western Australia

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

ideology does it represent. The students can, if they wish, cut paragraphs from the story and/or rearrang them, cut down headlines, and crop photos. In creating the front page, they come to understand the process of choosing the news.

The package consists of student booklets, containing the news stories, different headlines for each story, photos of the events being described and a blank layout of the front page of *The Camworth Gazette*. The booklets also contain instructions to the students. To counteract the possibility that students may lay out the front page without too much thought for the process, the booklets also provide a partial run-through of the choosing process, asking students about their choices. Accompanying the booklets is a single sheet "Teacher's Notes" which states the purpose of the unit, introduces and explains the key concepts to be taught, lays out a step-by-step procedure and suggests follow-up activities.

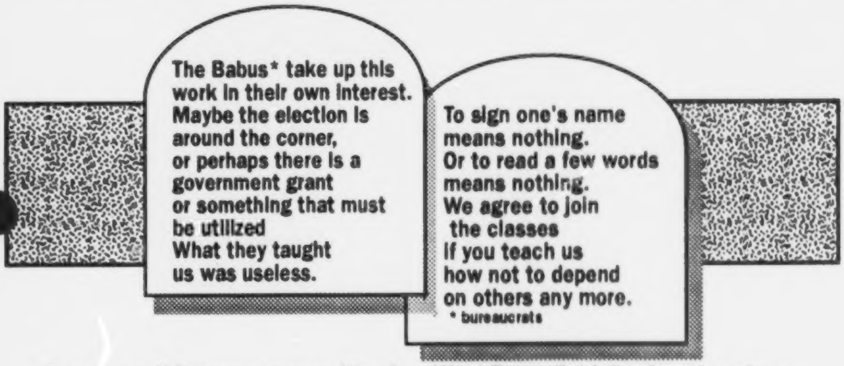
The package, consisting of 10 student booklets and Teacher's Notes costs £8.25 ($16.50 approximately) and is available from:
The English and Media Centre, Sutherland Street, London, SW1V 4LH
English and Media Centre materials and catalogue is available in Canada through Canadian Council of Teachers of English (CCTE) publications.

May 1992 Vol. 8 No. 2

Literacy across the curriculum

Connecting literacy in the schools, community and workplace

Concerning literacy and ethics



The Babus* take up this
work in their own interest.
Maybe the election is
around the corner,
or perhaps there is a
government grant
or something that must
be utilized
What they taught
us was useless.

To sign one's name
means nothing.
Or to read a few words
means nothing.
We agree to join
the classes
If you teach us
how not to depend
on others any more.

* bureaucrats

From a well-known poem written in a West Bengali adult education class

Education could be viewed as a giant research project, although we ourselves are not always clear about when it crosses the line from what medicine calls "practice" to what it calls "research." The new preoccupation with ethics has raised our awareness that we can do harm and create risk even when we believe we are doing good. — from a speech by Margaret Somerville, Centre for Medicine, Law, and Ethics, McGill

Nowhere in education is the need for ethical inquiry more pressing than in relation to literacy. In trying to reach those who have not been served by the regular social or educational systems, we are dealing with people who have needs that extend far beyond the requirements of basic reading and writing.

In trying to reform the current education system to meet the needs of increasingly diverse students bodies, we face questions about the social and cultural values that drive schooling. Asking schools to make an entire population highly literate and critically autonomous is a new and revolutionary demand. The current system was never designed to do it and ad hoc reforms will not produce the capability, particularly when the reforms often cancel each other out.

Third World and us

In developing countries, where education has always been a luxury for the privileged, there is now some recognition that many of the early mass literacy campaigns of the past forty years were inadequate or misguided. Teaching people disembodied elementary reading and writing skills at a grade 5 level is not going to make them self-sufficient or politically autonomous. Methodologies and textbooks developed in a colonial language do not necessarily transfer to a native tongue.

With the recognition by local and international agencies that good intentions are not enough, more recent Third World initiatives in literacy and education have concentrated on the learners' personal and social needs; they integrate the teaching of literacy into the teaching of skills that

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14 Announcements
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The Centre for Literacy Montreal, Quebec

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literacy and education have concentrated on the learners' personal and social needs; they integrate the teaching of literacy into the teaching of skills that support a local economic or social project. While these still tend to be sporadically available and poorly sustained, they are responsive to local needs.

Because the literacy initiative in western countries is so new, so fragmented, and, in some cases, so difficult to reconcile with the image of being "developed," Canada has not yet subjected her own endeavours to ethical scrutiny. Looking closely at the issue means asking about the entire youth and adult education and training systems and the social support networks.

Drop-out and distortion

There are some pernicious ideas taking hold in the Canadian media and influencing public policy which seriously threaten attempts to look at education holistically. Two of these are related to initial schooling and drop-outs.

The traditional North American model presents school as a place you attend in your youth. Formal education ends when you finish or leave, and you do this in linear progression from one level to the next on a single trade or professional track.

Future studies show another model emerging — people will leave and return to some kind of formal or informal learning on a part-time basis throughout their lives as technological and social changes demand new types of knowledge and skills.

Yet working from the old model, government and business agencies and editorial writers have been creating a crisis around the issue of school drop-outs. They talk about alarming drop-out rates, about the long-term economic and social costs consequences of an underskilled workforce when more jobs require at least high school certification.

A recent report by the Economic Council of Canada castigated schools for a drop-out rate of 30%. The Conference Board of Canada went further. It calculated the lifetime costs to the Canadian economy of the drop-outs from 1989 alone at a staggering $4 billion. Their operational definition of a drop-out was someone who did not complete high school within four years. When asked in a public forum whether they had figures for how many of those students eventually completed or returned to school, they admitted they had no way of tracking.

The most recent study by Stats Can reduces the figure to 24%, and notes that failure was cited by only one in ten as the reason for leaving; 30% said boredom drove them out.

At the same time, the Ministry of Youth funds unevaluated "Stay-in - School" initiatives across the country. This, while most provincial governments have cut funding for adult education, (particularly part-time students which includes large numbers of literacy students).

The Conference Board, in claiming that lifetime earnings for secondary graduates are higher, shows a graph that indicates 70% of jobs in the 21st century will require a secondary education. That still leaves 30% that will not. Why then do we want students to stay in school? It has to be for more than economic reasons.

Despite disturbing contradictions in these studies, most media report them without analysis, as "fact." There are indeed many drop-outs, but overall the number of high school graduates in Canada has been climbing steadily since the 1950s. Not everyone is going to go through school in a linear progression. How do schools need to change to give a credible foundation to those who do stay or to meet the personal needs of those considering dropping out?

In an ethical framework, we are bound to ask questions about the nature of the social contract itself — Who is defining literacy in particular contexts, and how do those definitions exclude or include certain groups or individuals ? Are we increasing the marginalization of some groups in Canada using literacy/education as the measure? What opportunities do we offer to learners who do not learn in traditional ways in school settings? What promises do we make to learners about the outcomes of literacy and education, and can we keep those promises? What portion of national resources are we willing to allocate to education as a lifelong integrated endeavour? [L.S.]

Literacy Across the Curriculum
The Centre for Literacy
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Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3Z 1A4

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Ethics and educators: travelling in hope

Ethics is one of those words that we use everyday, taking for granted that we know what it means — until we attempt to define and apply it. Then we recognize how complex a concept it is. Like "justice," we can identify its absence, but can rarely point out its presence. Yet there is a growing preoccupation with ethics today in every profession and context. Margaret Somerville, noted McGill University ethicist, addressed the what, why and how of ethics in a recent Montreal speech.

Somerville organized her talk around five questions: What is ethics? Why is there a perceived need for ethics now? Has our search for ethics caused change? How have new technologies given rise to this discussion of ethics? and, What relevance does this have for educators?

What is ethics?

Somerville traced the historical development of ethics from its classical roots as a sub-discipline of philosophy to its contemporary North American form as "applied ethics." She characterized the shift as the difference between talking about and doing ethics, which would be roughly parallel to the distinction between talking about and doing law or psychology.

She defined applied ethics as "the exercise of disciplined, informed discrimination in order to examine decision options in situations of conflict of moral values," and stressed that ethics has to be viewed as fluid, a continuum. There are at least four schools on that continuum, from the one that presents ethics as a fixed set of obligations and rules that must be applied in all instances to the one that accepts no rules but insists that every situation must be analysed as it arises. Somerville noted that in the past there have been battles among these schools, but that today we should look for integration, what she calls a "multi-variate" analysis.

Margaret A. Somerville

The key to its place in society is that it is concerned with ordinary values. The question we have to ask is: *Who decides* what is ethical, on *what basis*, using *which procedures*?

Why ethics now?

The answer is complex. Somerville suggests the search for ethics has taken on urgency as a reaction to the decline in religious faith and a recently shaken faith in the technology that had promised to replace religion. There has been a realization over the last decades that technology carries some serious risks and can be used to carry out non-natural events (e.g. "male" hermaphrodite giving birth).

Together with a lack of consensus on values in a multi-cultural society, a loss of trust in politicians, a general rise in the level of public education, and the ubiquitous presence of media information, an increased number of citizens feel competent and compelled to make their own judgments.

The absence of even a façade of religion has lead us to realize that we still have space for "spirit."

Ethics seems to promise the possibility of helping us fill that "space"through positive humane decision-making. The search for ethics, argues Somerville, is part of our reaction to the increasing uniformity and depersonalization of individuals in our world. She pointed out that counter-trends of individualism, self-determination, and autonomy, taken to extremes, are equally isolating.

In shifting from millenia of "blind" trust to an era of "earned" trust, we need ways of judging trust based on actions rather than power/status. Breaching ethics is antithetical to earning trust, and the number of contexts in which we have to make these judgments is growing, i.e. divorce, medical malpractice.

Ethics seems to offer us some protection. We are seeking ways of achieving collectivity that would allow individuals to be most fully human. Hence the preoccupation with defining and applying ethics.

Has our search for ethics caused change?

Somerville believes it has. She believes we have reversed the order of questions we ask about law and ethics and have begun to analyse issues beginning with the ethical. What if something is ethical, but not legal? She points to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as a seminal ethical document.

She asks whether educators have made a switch to arguing from ethics to education rather than vice versa. From one perspective, she suggests, education could be viewed as a giant research project. When does it cross the line from what medicine calls "practice" to what is called "research?" The search for ethics has raised our awareness that we can do harm and create risk even when we believe we are doing good.

Education is not neutral. The professions are value-forming, value-carrying, and value-affirming. Does our education build that recognition into its programs?

New technologies and ethics

New medical technologies has intensified the discussion of ethics. They too are not neutral in terms of impact and values. Consider the impact of the new birth technologies.

We have been confronted by the recognition that the more we know the more we do not know, that we can be controlled through the use of technology, and that we have access to information we may not want to know or that we may be better off not having. For example, do most people want to know how or when they will die? Can our psyches cope with this knowledge?

Ethics may offer us help in dealing with the uncertainties, anxieties, and fears generated by these new capacities.

Relevance for educators?

Although the relevance for education was implicit throughout the presentation, Somerville drew some specific inferences.

Educators are training those who will search for ethics and will in large measure define the characteristics of the search methodology. She offered some starting points.

The characteristics of the search will include intellectual integrity, honesty, information, insight, intuition, and all "ways of knowing." The methodology will necessarily demand transdisciplinarity.

Somerville acknowledged the potential and the frightening possibilities presented by this "challenge to the human spirit." The nature of democracy is in flux. Can we maintain respect for both the individual and the collectivity? Will optimism still be possible?

Without saying so specifically, Somerville is challenging education to redefine its mission.

Ethics should not be merely a topic or a subject of study. It must be the framework for the understanding and application of knowledge to underpin a humane twenty-first century [L.S.]

Margaret Somerville, Director of the Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law at McGill University, addressed an audience of educators at the joint annual conference of The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) and L'Association québecoise de pédagogie collégiale in Montreal on May 27, 1992.

The Centre for Literacy announces its Resource Teacher Project Winter 1993

Teachers/tutors/workplace trainers/volunteers from any discipline, any level of education (elementary, secondary, post-secondary), formal or informal, will have the opportunity to study, exchange and develop projects related to literacy in the broadest possible context.

Requirements:

- a weekly commitment of three hours on Wednesdays from 10:00 -1:00, January - May 1993
- development of a project or materials to be shared in your own milieu

Fees:

- no charge
- organizational support —release time/substitution

Information:

- if interested, please call Linda Shohet, 931-8731 at local 1411. We can provide details and tell you how to make your official request for support from your organization.

Registration limited to ten participants.

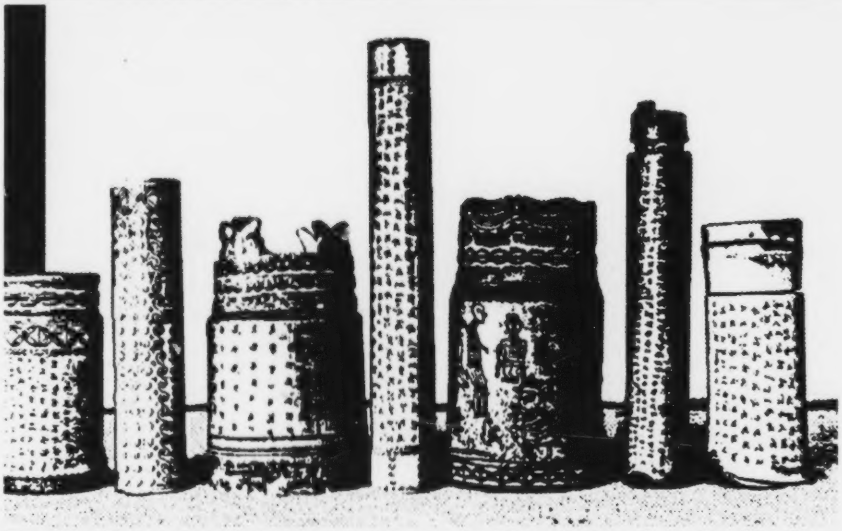
1 On bamboo literacy

In the rugged mountains of Southwestern Mindoro live the Hanunóo, one of the least known of the eighty-odd ethnic groups inhabiting the Philippine Islands. Isolated geographically, self-sufficient to an amazing degree, having contact with exceedingly few outsiders, and without formal schooling of any sort, these five to six thousand mountain folk have nevertheless distinguished themselves among Philippine pagans as *literate* tribesmen. During 1947 I had the opportunity of living with these interesting people and learning about their unique way of life and, especially, about their script.

...

[Their] highly stylized method of courting and serenading witnessed during a panlúdan [annual socio-religious event] ... brings us ... to the subject of **bamboo literacy...** [T]he popularity of both men and women during these get-togethers is largely determined by the number of traditional love songs they are capable of singing and their ability to fit every occasion with a suitable chant. To collect and learn a large number of these chants it is most essential that one be able to read. In other words, the incentive to learn the use of their ancient syllabary does not stem from a desire merely to preserve the old form of writing so much as it does from the interest taken by young people of both sexes in building up a repertoire of as many of the traditional love songs as possible.

Some Hanunóo communities in the central area are more than 60 per cent literate! This includes women as well as men. In one family I lived with for several months, all of the adults except one were literate.



Bamboo lime tubes, tobacco containers and love letters inscribed in the Hanunóo script. (Graphic based on photo by H.A. Figueras)

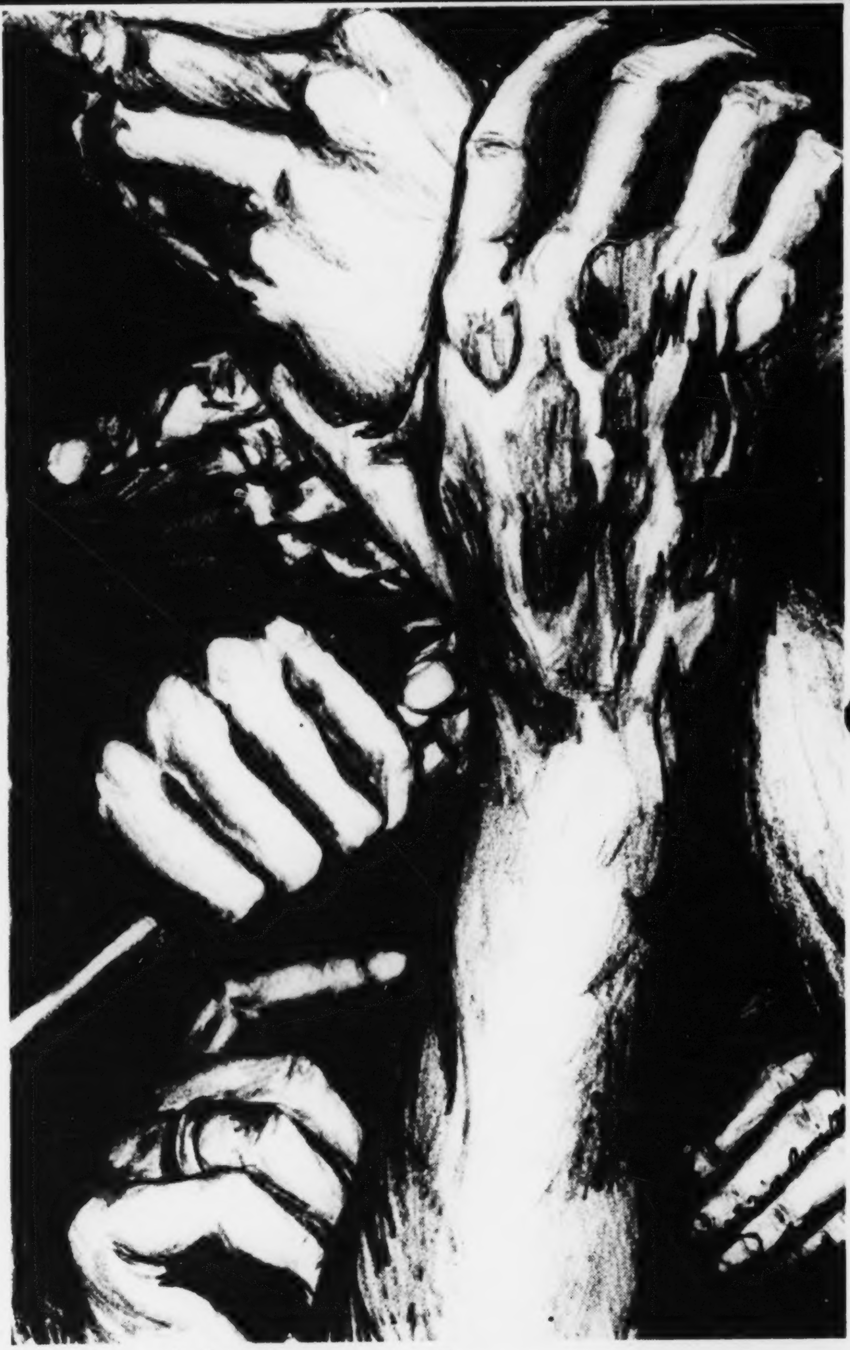
Harold C. Conklin, "Bamboo Literacy on Mindoro," *Pacific Discovery*, 3: 4-11, 1949. 8-9.

2 On the increasing importance of visual communication

Schools continue to be dominated by print. To have difficulties in decoding print is, in school terms, to be a failure. Outside of school the most influential and widely disseminated modes of communication are visual. ... [T]elevision is probably the most important source of political information in our society and it is also regarded by most people as the most reliable source of news, perhaps because of its ability to present a visual record of events. Even print itself is coming to be regarded as a visual medium. Layout, design and typography are widely understood to be a significant part of the total communication process, whilst even the term 'print media' is frequently a misnomer, since in most texts print is rarely unaccompanied by visual images.

Len Masterman, *Teaching the Media*, (Routledge:London and New York) 1990. 13.

Drawing a link to literacy



Background

Each year a group of "Resource-teachers" meet together weekly for one semester at The Centre for Literacy to study and discuss concepts and issues of literacy; each teacher develops a literacy-related project that can be shared with other teachers as models. The project described here was conceived in winter 1992 by Resource-teacher Catherine Bates, a recognized artist, poet, and Fine Arts teacher, working with Linda Shohet from The Centre.

Catherine began with her belief that the artificial separation between visual and verbal expression imposed by formal schooling ignores the human impulse to draw which preceded literacy as a means of expressing and preserving human communication.

For this project, Catherine asked students in her Fine Arts classes to draw/paint something of meaning to them and then to write about the same subject in any form they wished: poetry, narrative, words imbedded in the drawing, etc. We planned to analyse the work to see whether drawing and writing together gave added depth or dimension to the students' expression in either mode. We expected art students to resist writing as inappropriate in an art class.

We were pleasantly stunned by the reaction. Although Catherine did not specify a personal subject, almost all the students drew/told a personal story [See BOX]. Like lifestorying, this technique elicited a powerful response — students leaped at the opportunity to explore themselves and asked for more and more class time to be allotted.

Even more surprising was the

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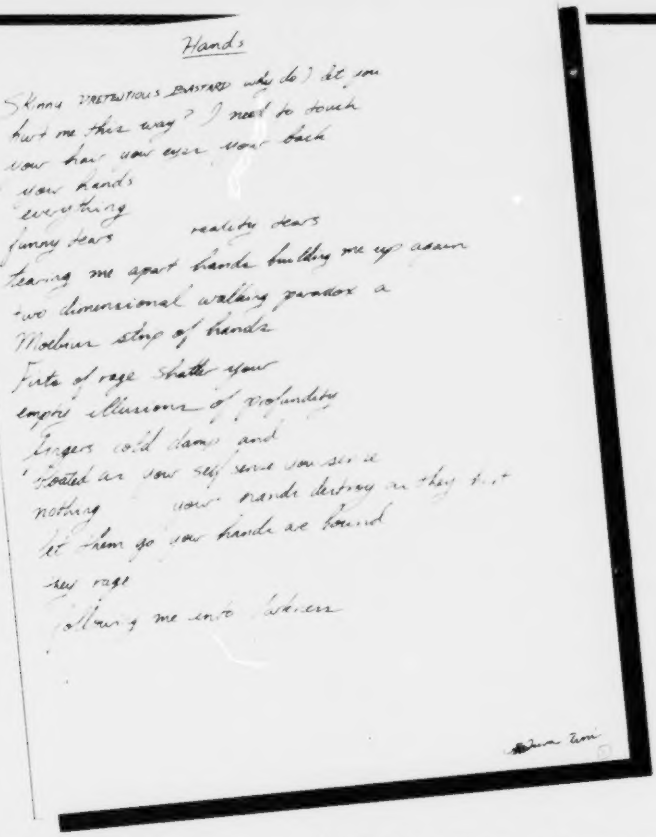

Hands

Skinny PRETENTIOUS BASTARD why do I let you
hurt me this way? I need to touch
your hair your eyes your back
your hands
everything
funny tears   reality tears
tearing me apart hands building me up again
two dimensional walking paradox a
Moebius strip of hands
Fists of rage shatter your
empty illusions of profundity
fingers cold damp and
bloated as your self sense you sense
nothing   your hands destroy as they hit
let them go your hands are bound
new rage
following me into [illegible]

Continued from page 6

frankness in choice of themes. Many of these students are second-language writers, and some are people who generally avoid reading and writing. Yet they clearly experienced a sense of delight and empowerment in drawing and telling their stories.

Unlike many school situations when students neglect to pick up assignments once they have been submitted, Catherine's students wanted these back. One young woman told her, "These are like pieces of ourselves— we are just reclaiming ourselves."

Catherine and I have applied for a grant to publish a selection of the student works or to mount an exhibit. We think that the topics are so universal that other teachers and students will enjoy seeing and reading them. We also make a rationale for drawing or painting as a link to, and in some ways, a form of literacy, and argue that this idea can be applied effectively in informal or formal learning situations—from basic literacy classes to post-graduate interdisciplinary seminars. [L.S.]

The drawing and poem were created by Shira Avni, a Fine Arts student at Dawson College

BOX 1

Teacher's comments on the process

- From the beginning, students were interested in this project and asked clarifying questions. They noticed the difference between it and the usual projects in a Fine Arts class — i.e.working from a live model or from still life objects, or doing exercises in colour and texture. It is rare, at least in terms of subject matter, that they are invited to focus so personally or to draw on their own resources for direction.

- During the actual class time, students were unusually absorbed in their work, asking few questions, talking little among themselves. They took breaks irregularly, sometimes not at all, and worked through to the end of class time and past. When they handed in the project, they were anxious to know when they would get them back.

- To my great surprise, students who were absent during the class came with the project completed to the next class. They all wanted to do it again. —Catherine Bates, May 1992.

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Thinking about writing and thinking

Challenges

Some beliefs that many teachers of writing have come to accept as "truths" may need to be reexamined. Lee Odell, a respected teacher-researcher, who has devoted years of study to writing across the disciplines, writing in non-academic settings, and more recently, to critical thinking, is challenging two of these "truths." One is that writing to learn works in all disciplines and all contexts. The other is that thinking skills have to be arranged and taught hierarchically.

Disciplinary thinking and "insider" knowledge

Our "insider" knowledge as writers has often informed our teaching of writing, Odell told a group of English teachers at a session at the Conference of College Composition and Communication (4Cs) in March 1992.

However, he claims that in his experience with colleagues in Writing Across the Curriculum, he has come upon a different model — the colleague who says, "I *teach* people how to use writing to learn philosophy. *I* don't actually write to learn philosophy myself." And Odell is not contemptuous of this teacher. On the contrary, he suggests that he is becoming more cautious about encouraging colleagues to use traditional LAC strategies —expressive writing, student voice, discovery journals— to guarantee discipline learning.

Odell draws on his own experience as a novice in a Buddhism class last year. Journal writing, his favoured way of recasting knowledge for himself, did *not* work. He was heavily reliant on the authority of the teacher to explain meanings in the context of Buddhism; one of the ways of making meaning was to listen to his master. The first steps did not involve reflecting, reasoning, or questioning, but mainly paraphrasing.

What this suggests for him is that all the "truths" of the writing teacher may not generalize. We need to have a little more humility, and certainly have to become "insiders" in a particular context before we can share effective learning strategies with our colleagues.

Reassessing thinking skills

In an April workshop at The Centre for Literacy, Lee Odell presented an unconventional way of looking at thinking. Rather than rank thinking as "higher" and "lower-order" skills, which he finds unhelpful in assessing what students are actually doing, Odell has culled five general clusters of thinking strategies [see BOX]. These clusters, he argues, include in simplified form, all the strategies that students of all ages use when engaged in activities that we characterize as thinking.

By identifying which of the strategies students are using in particular pieces of work, we can also identify what weaknesses they exhibit, and design assignments that force the use of a broader range of the clusters. Odell believes that the design of tasks determines to a large degree the diversity of thinking that students develop. [LS]

Synthesis of thinking strategies prepared by Lee Odell 1992

Selecting and encoding
- Deciding what to include/exclude; what to attend to/ignore or minimize
- Summarizing, paraphrasing, translating from one medium to another; deciding how to phrase an idea, feeling, observation, etc.

Creating/acknowledging dissonance
- Asking questions
- Noting ironies, paradoxes, conflicts, inconsistencies
- Acknowledging uncertainty, incompleteness

Drawing on prior knowledge
- Understanding or responding to new information in terms of personal experience/ vicarious experience/ academic learning

Seeing relations
- Comparing, classifying, creating analogies/metaphors, noting similarities
- Looking for patterns or trends
- Noting contrasts, making distinctions
- Observing how something changes over time
- Noting sequentialrelations/time/cause/effect/ hypothetical

Considering alternative perspectives
- Empathizing
- Looking for good news and bad; doubting and believing; seeing pro and con
- Trying to find alternative interpretations/explanations

Sponsorship and education: Asking some questions

Some participants were initially puzzled when author Len Masterman focused both a recent media conference presentation and part of a Montreal workshop on the question of analysing sponsorship in culture and the arts. They were skeptical about the connections between sponsorship and media education.

The point of departure for Masterman is the definition of sponsorship. The lack of critical response to sponsorship from the education sector is attributable to the fact that it permeates our society and that the world-wide shift to a market system has been assumed to be synonymous with greater democratization. The public generally perceives of sponsorship as a form of charity or philanthropy. Not so, says Masterman. It is a form of advertising or marketing which pays a company high dividends for a relatively small investment compared to the costs of real advertising space/time.

Long an accepted and largely unexamined practice in culture and sports, corporate sponsorship is now becoming a trend in education. But, Masterman acknowledges, it is not easy to mount a critique from within sectors increasingly dependent on sponsorship dollars, which often support better programming and sometimes are their sole means of survival.

A critical reading of sponsorship

To guide a critical reading of sponsorship, Masterman listed eleven principles, several of which he elaborated in his presentations.

- The first is that "The rich get richer..." An activity is in the best position to get support if it is already successful, which sustains an already disproportionate allocation of funds.
- Sponsorship exerts a strong conservative influence. Usually sponsors are not interested in experimentation and do not want to be identified with work that fails or offends. This leads to support for the tried and successful, a disastrous principle for the arts which thrive on experiment and innovation.
- There is always a danger of a sponsor influencing the project it supports, i.e.when grant applicants alter objectives to meet sponsor interests rather than the logical demands of the project itself.
- There is a danger of compromising integrity. In the arts or education, Masterman posits, integrity is all you have. If you work in a public institution while serving two masters, whose interests are being served, and does the public lose out?
- While educators and artists tend to judge their own work in terms of its intrinsic worth or social value, sponsors tend to think of cultural spheres as purely instrumental: Are these environments conducive for selling our products?
- This trend toward instrumentalism is revealed in the language that has increasingly permeated the arts and education where talk now frequently centres on "delivery" of "products."
- Sponsorship can create a two-tiered audience, those privileged through connection to the sponsor and the general paying public.
- There is a danger that short-term market-driven sponsorship will replace permanent public funding leaving both the arts and education vulnerable.

After considering the arguments Masterman presented, it was clear that, whether we agree in whole, in part, or not at all with the analysis he offers, at the least educators need to develop some frame of reference of our own for making critical judgments about the positive/negative implications of corporate sponsorship, which is being touted in more and more circles, including educational ones, as our salvation. [LS]

Len Masterman presented a detailed analysis of sponsorship at the Guelph media education conference, May 13 -15, 1992, and at a full-day workshop at The Centre for Literacy on May 22, 1992. A video of the May 22 workshop will be available in summer 1992.

BOX 1

Objectives of sponsorship as a marketing device

- To generate awareness and public recognition level ("Name the _____company you think of first..")
- To attract media attention
- To target a specific audience
- To link the image of the company with the sponsored activity or event
- To provide opportunities for corporate hospitality (Give tickets to events, treat clients.)

Business-education partnerships that work

Effective Reading in Context (E.R.I.C): A workplace literacy project of Syncrude Canada ltd. and Keyano College

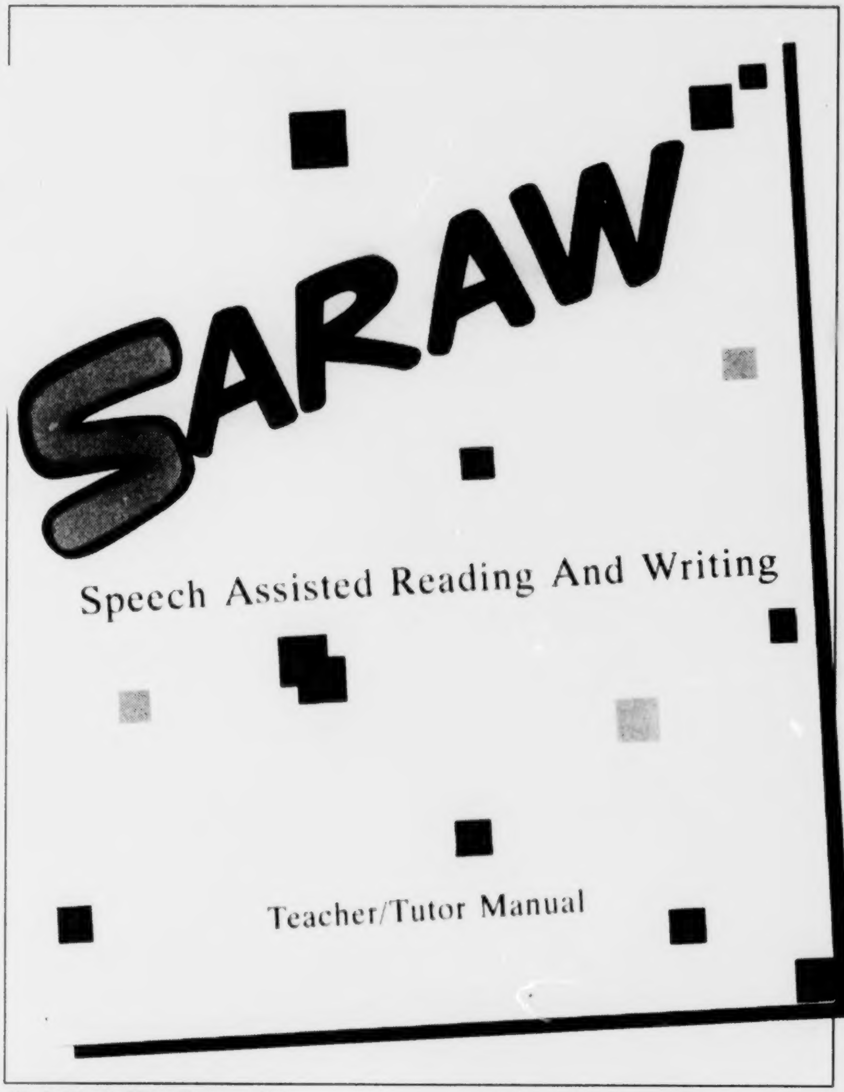
The Conference Board of Canada chose an Alberta workplace literacy partnership as the recipient of one of its Business-Education Partnership Awards presented at its annual conference in Calgary in May.

In 1988, Syncrude Canada, Fort McMurray, Alberta, identified a reading comprehension problem among supervisors in the mine; since then, a comprehensive program has been developed by Keyano College in consultation with employees to address not only reading, but also writing and oral communications needs.

The 16-hour writing workshop develops confidence and experience in composing workplace-related texts. The 24-hour oral communications component provides instruction and practice with speaking and listening one-to-one, and speaking and listening in groups. Workplace scenarios are constructed around such activities as asking questions, giving instructions, and leading team meetings.

Syncrude has recently signed an agreement with Keyano College to make the reading comprehension component available free to employers across Alberta and Canada. Keyano College will adapt the materials to specific workplaces and provide instructor training on a consulting basis.

For information, contact Nancy Steel, Keyano College, (403) 791-8943.



SARAW

Speech Assisted Reading And Writing

Teacher/Tutor Manual

S.A.R.A.W.: Speech-Assisted Reading and Writing wins ACCofliteracy award

This is a project that needs to be seen in action to understand why it deserved the 1992 ACCC Literacy Award. When a wheelchair-bound speech-impaired woman laboriously sounds out her story while writing on a computer screen, you are watching a dream fulfilled.

SARAW is a talking computer program designed to teach basic reading and writing to adults with

Continued on page 11

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severe physical disabilities who are non-verbal. It is made for students who read and write at a grades 2 to 6 level.

Many of these learners are unable to turn pages, hold a pencil or speak, but some of them can use non-traditional methods of communication such a Blissymbols or PICSYMS. SARAW is compatible with special software that allows these students to use a computer even if they cannot use a standard keyboard.

The software was developed by the Neil Squire Foundation in conjunction with Capilano College in North Vancouver, B.C. The Foundation is recognized worldwide for its development of technology for people with physical disabilities. Capilano has many years experience creating and implementing literacy programs.

Multiple partners

Support for the design and development of SARAW was provided to the Foundation by the Canadian Studies Directorate and the National Literacy Secretariat. For the pilot-project, Capilano received funding from the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education, Training, and Technology, and the National Literacy Secretariat. In 1991, Digital Equipment of Canada, Ltd. donated computers to set up a SARAW lab at Capilano and to provide computers in students' homes while they are enrolled in the program. The Vancouver Foundation and the University Mason's Lodge #91 made contributions to purchase special adaptive equipment.

Sharing SARAW

SARAW

From September 1992 to April 1993, through special grants and with additional equipment from Digital, SARAW workshops will be conducted at other community colleges in B.C. There is a plan to eventually share this program across Canada with a SARAW base in community college in different provinces.

The Centre for Literacy will include an introduction to SARAW during its 1992 Summer Institute.

For information: Don Bentley, SARAW software developer, Neil Squire Foundation, Tel: (604) 929-2455; FAX: (604) 929-3316, or John Potts, Dean of ABE, Capilano College, Tel: (604) 984-4971; FAX: (614) 984-1718.

Meadowbrook School: CIBA-Geigy Pharmaceuticals

In 1987, a partnership was formed between Meadowbrook Elementary School in Lachine Quebec and CIBA-Geigy Pharmaceuticals under the auspices of Programme EdComm at the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal.

Programme EdComm, established by the board and co-sponsored with the Montreal Board of Trade, promotes and coordinates school-business partnerships to enhance the resources available to schools as well as to benefit the business partners.

The initial objectives of the Meadowbrook-CIBA-Geigy partnership were to expand and enrich the science program of the school.

Groups of Meadowbrook students regularly use the CIBA-Geigy laboratories to conduct controlled experiments under the supervision of company scientists and technicians who provide enrichment for gifted students as well as basic science teaching. There is on-going collaboration with teachers to enhance their knowledge and provide materials classroom science projects. Projects focus on laboratory techniques, research methods and experimentation around topics such as vitamin content, acid rain and water quality.

Currently the two partners are collaborating to establish on company premises a day care program and a computer lab designed for the students. School fund-raising efforts are supported by CIBA-Geigy whose employees use the school gymnasium for fitness and sports. School parents and staff join company employees during annual CPR courses. The Meadowbrook choir and ukelele band perform several times a year for CIBA-Geigy employees.

For information: Nancy Buzzell, Principal, Meadowbrook Elementary, Lachine, QC,
Tel: (514) 637-5868.

Continued on page 11

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EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS PROFILE: The Critical Skills Required of the Canadian Workforce

Academic Skills

Those skills which provide the basic foundation to get, keep and progress on a job and to achieve the best results.

Canadian employers
need a person who can:

Communicate

- Understand and speak the languages in which business is conducted
- Listen to understand and learn
- Read, comprehend and use written materials, including graphs, charts and displays
- Write effectively in the languages in which business is conducted

Think

- Think critically and act logically to evaluate situations, solve problems and make decisions
- Understand and solve problems involving mathematics and use the results
- Use technology, instruments, tools and information systems effectively
- Access and apply specialized knowledge from various fields (e.g. skilled trades, technology, physical sciences, arts and social sciences)

Learn

- Continue to learn for life

Personal Management Skills

The combination of skills, attitudes and behaviours required to get, keep and progress on a job and to achieve the best results

Canadian employers need a person who can demonstrate:

Positive Attitudes and Behaviours

- Self-esteem and confidence
- Honestly, integrity and personal ethics
- A positive attitude toward learning, growth and personal health
- Initiative, energy and persistence to get the job done

Responsibility

- The ability to set goals and priorities in work and personal life
- The ability to plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals
- Accountability for actions taken

Adaptability

- A positive attitude toward change
- Recognition of and respect for people's diversity and individual differences
- The ability to identify and suggest new ideas to get the job done-creativity

Teamwork Skills

Those skills needed to work with others on a job and to achieve the best results

Canadian employers need a person who can:

Work with Others

- Understand and contribute to the organization's goals
- Understand and work within the culture of the group
- Plan and make decisions with others and support the outcomes
- Respect the thoughts and opinions of others in the group
- Exercise "give and take" to achieve group results
- Seek a team approach as appropriate
- Lead when appropriate, mobilizing the group for high performance.

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Continued from page 10

What the Conference Board says about The Employability Skills Profile:

In presenting this document for consultation and discussion, The Conference Board of Canada outlines its conception and its possible uses.

They warn against trying to develop these skills in a special skills class in school. Rather, they suggest, they should be developed through life experiences provided by parents, through integrated approaches in schooling, through on-the-job support, and through formal and informal opportunities for upgrading over a lifetime.

They note that employers regularly assess the skills as part of the interview process and that education has assessments in place along the school and post-secondary continuum. They do recommend that employers and educators might effectively collaborate on examining assessment practices against the skills profile.

Finally, they assert that all the skills listed in the profile already appear either explicitly or implicitly in the general goal statements of all the provincial and territorial education departments, with two main differences: that preparing students for the workplace is only one of several important goals required of schools and that many of the skills listed are developed in a variety of domains, including the pursuit of other educational goals. Their point is that promoting these skills is compatible with the other goals and objectives of schools.

A response to The Employability Skills Profile:

These skills have all been presented before in various formats; the best known is probably the spiral designed by Anthony Carnevale for the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). However, The Conference Board may have come up with a more usable model, given its goal to create a "framework for dialogue and action."

I have never liked the word "skills" because of the static mechanical connotations; for me, "abilities" seems to express more closely the idea of flexibility and possibility. But given that "skills" is the word most easily identified by most employers and by a good many educators, The Conference Board has made the thoughtful choice to represent the skills on a continuum rather than as a hierarchy. As foundational skills, communication, thinking and learning remain the key to all the others; unlike the ASTD model, this one has subsumed "leadership" under the rubric of "Teamwork Skills," with the typical Canadian qualifier "when appropriate."

Although The Conference Board tries to take a deliberately neutral or supportive stance towards the education system, this document does have an unarticulated subtext.

It may well be true that every education department in the country claims to teach these skills and that large employers across the country claim to require these skills among employees; the reality is that in most education systems and most workplaces, the opportunities to develop or use many of these skills are notably absent.

Studies of high-performance workplaces in North America have estimated that only about 5% of companies fit the description. High-performance schools are about as rare. So The Conference Board may have wittingly or unwittingly thrown down the gauntlet to both schools and employers — if they both were to accept the challenge to collaboratively examine their assessment practices against this profile, they would find them wanting. That could be the starting point for a response that would begin to build the learning environments that this document calls for.

The Employability Profile is well worth bringing into Canadian classrooms and boardrooms as a catalyst for discussion. Parents, teachers, students, administrators, policy makers, and employers could all measure their results against their rhetoric. [L.S.]

Canadian Literacy Thesaurus Forthcoming

The first edition of the Canadian Literacy Thesaurus/Thésaurus canadian d'alphabétisation will be available in summer 1992. The thesaurus lists 3400 terms (1700 in each language) that are commonly used by literacy specialists in Canada. It will facilitate the exchange of literacy-related information across Canada and provide precise subject access to collections of materials in the field. Information: The Canadian Literacy Thesaurus Coalition, c/o Alpha Ontario, 21 Park Road, Toronto, Ontario, M5W 2N1.
FAX:(416) 397-5915.

Call for Proposals Learning Assistance Association of New England

Ninth Annual Conference
Northeastern University,
Burlington, MA
October 30, 1992
Topics include: Basic writing, Reading, Critical thinking, Testing & assessment, Developmental math, Developmental science, Tutoring, Learning disabilities, Learning & women, ESL, & others.
Deadline: June 30, 1992

Call for Papers

Lifelong Learning: Improving Academic Quality During a Retrenchment Era
1993 Annual Conference
National University Research Institute
February 10 -12, 1993
San Diego, CA
Themes: Diversity, Teaching, Delivery, Basics, Assessment,Technology.
Deadline: July 1, 1992.

Call for Papers Ninth Conference on Computers and Writing

University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI
May 20 -23, 1993
Topics: Computers, writing, and K-12 classroom, Getting started, Applications of Hypertext, Explorations of the virtual classroom, Promoting collaboration, Effects on learning process, Changing socio-political contexts for computer use, & others.
Deadline: October 15, 1992

Summer 1992 Native Adult Instructor Diploma Program

A Program of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training, and Technology of British Columbia, will be offered in eleven sessions between June and August at four sites— Prince George, Kelowna, Vancouver, and Kamloops.
Application deadline: Two weeks before the course.
For information: 1-800-665-9972.

Literacy Partners of Quebec get started

Literacy Partners of Quebec (LPQ), the recently-formed coalition, is an umbrella group of English-language reading councils, school boards, educators, learners and community organizations involved in literacy in the province.

To help promote and implement English literacy programming and networking in Quebec, LPQ is:
a) compiling a directory of resource people and organizations; and
b) helping to identify and fund several small project proposals to be submitted from the various regions of the province.

Learners, educators and administrators are invited to contact LPQ: a) to share ideas for projects needed in their communities, and
b) to provide names of contacts/resource people to be included in the directory.
Literacy Partners of Quebec can be reached at The Centre for Literacy (Dawson College),
3040 Sherbrooke Street West,
Montreal. H3Z 1A4.
Tel. (514) 931-8731 ext. 1413; FAX (514) 931-5181.
Attention; Michael Stephens and Marilyn Caplan, Outreach and Directory Coordinators.

Schools of Thought

- Copies of *Schools of Thought: How the Politics of Literacy Shapes Thinking in the Classroom,* by Rexford Brown, reviewed in the March issue, can be ordered directly from The Centre for Literacy.

Send a money order for CAN $25.00 plus $3.00 postage and handling to:
The Centre for Literacy,
3040 Sherbrooke Street West,
Montreal, Quebec, Canada,
H3Z 1A4.

Video on national assessments

- On January 30, 1992, Rexford Brown presented an evening on national assessments: what they can and cannot do. A videotape of the presentation is available from The Centre.

Send a money order for $12.50, including postage and handling to:
The Centre for Literacy,
3040 Sherbrooke Street West,
Montreal, Quebec, Canada,
H3Z 1A4.

Local Conferences

Dimensions of Literacy in a Multicultural Society
October 2 - 4, 1992
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec

PACT-PAPT Teachers' Convention
"Dealing with today..teaching for tomorrow"
November 26 - 27, 1992
Montreal, Quebec

Springboards '93
"Celebrating Language"
April 22 - 23, 1993
Montreal, Quebec
Speakers: Peter Medway, Norma Michelson, Aviva Freedman

Chronological Conference Listing

Association of Departments of English (ADE)
Summer Seminars - Midwest
June 18 - 21, 1992
Waterloo University
Waterloo, Ontario
Summer Seminars - East
July 9 -12, 1992
Penn State University

Writing in Engineering Design
June 24 - 26, 1992
Michigan Technological University
Houghton, Michigan

1992 CAAE Conference
"Equity and Access in Adult Education"
Regina, Saskatchewan
June 17 - 20, 1992

The Penn State Conference on Rhetoric & Composition
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA
July 8 - 11, 1992

Martha's Vineyard Summer Workshops 1992 Institute on Writing and Teaching
"Teachers Learning with Teachers"
July 1 - 3, 1992
The Vineyard Sampler
Making Connections: Reading, Writing, Responding
Session I July 5 -16
Session II July 19 - 30
Credits available from Northeastern University
Boston, MA
For information: (617) 437-3637

Prairie Literacy Institute
Credits available from University of Saskatchewan
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, SK
July 13 - 24, 1992
For information: (306) 933-6490

1992 Summer Institute for Literacy Professionals
World Education Inc. & Literacy Support Initiative
Center for International Education
University Of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA
July 13 - August 15, 1992

Writing Program Administration (WPA) Workshop
July 20 - 23, 1992
University of Denver
(WPA) Conference
"Relevant Research in the 90's"
July 23 - 25, 1992
Denver, Colorado

The Gulf Coast Conference on the Teaching of Writing
Point Clear AL
August 9 -12, 1992

Bard College Workshops
July 3-17
Week-long workshops in:
Writing and Thinking; Writing and Thinking in the Middle School; Writing to Learn; Inquiry into Essay; Narrative Thinking; Visual Thinking; Teaching Poetry: Reading and Writing; Language: Power and Play; Writing Retreat for Teachers.

Please note: *Workshops are concurrent; participants in weekend and week-long workshops register for* ONE WORKSHOP ONLY.

August 1992: Ten-day Advanced Workshop in Teaching Language and Thinking (concurrent with Bard Freshman Workshop in Language & Thinking). .

The 12th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Educational Reform
"Cultivating the reasoning mind: Teaching, testing, standards, and assessment
August 9 -12, 1992
Sonoma State University
Rohnert Park, CA
For information: (707) 664-2940.

The Prince George Dyslexic Society Fourth Annual Multi-Sensory Learning Summer School
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Critical Issues in Basic Writing: 1992
October 8 - 10, 1992
University of Maryland at College Park

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1992 Society for Literature and Science
"Nature, Values and the Rhetoric of Science"
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Atlanta, Georgia

The Writing Process: Prospect and Retrospect
October 9 -11, 1992
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November 19 - 21, 1992
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Modern Language Association 1992
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VOL 2 No. 2

Medi FOCUS

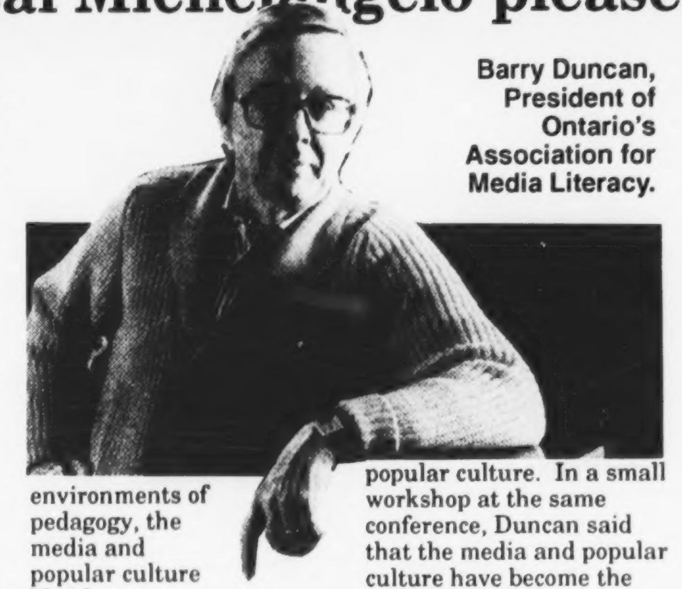
THE CENTRE FOR LITERACY

Will the real Michelangelo please stand up...

"...Our pedagogy invites children to bring their culture to the classroom...." according to McGill Professor Claudia Mitchell. With or without the blessing of parents and teachers, students draw from their leisure activities for classroom discussion and writing activities. Ms Mitchell stresses the importance of teachers acknowledging the culture of students; only then, she suggests, will students be more open to recognizing the culture of their teachers.

Mitchell is right. Invited or not, icons of popular culture are regularly brought to the classroom. Students wear their favourite characters on T-shirts, use notebooks decorated with Ninja Turtles, sports heros or rock stars to write about Ninja Turtles, sports heros or rock stars. They do this as the wires of their Walkmans dangle from the small headsets sitting around their necks.

Current discussion of popular culture calls into question the traditional notion of "hi" and "lo" culture. Educators, who historically have been entrusted to pass on the best that has been thought and said, have tended to resist popular culture in the classroom. This is becoming harder to do as the environments of pedagogy, the media and popular culture blend.



Barry Duncan, President of Ontario's Association for Media Literacy.

Media and popular culture

At a recent Montral conference, Barry Duncan, President of Ontario's Association for Media Literacy, grounded his keynote address on the relationship between media education and the cultural environment. He pointed out that as media literacy continues to gain importance in the school curricula, media studies are expanding to include popular culture. In a small workshop at the same conference, Duncan said that the media and popular culture have become the equivalent of the old-time storytellers and can very comfortably co-exist with the written word.

Duncan suggested that young people's use of language and the meanings they appropriate to certain words are among the many indicators of media influence. Teachers in the workshop noted that at times, their students' writing emulates the violence they see in the media; however, they call it "action." Another example is their use of the word "not" at the end of a statement, influenced by "Wayne's World," the regular "Saturday Night Live" feature, and more recently, a movie.

Another point Duncan made was that Bart Simpson, the two characters of "Wayne"s World" and sports heros have all become part of the celebrity phenomenon, as kids "grab" popular culture text and fashion and either reject or accept them; either way, they are making a statement about them. Pop culture is by nature conservative, with one fad feeding off the last, none of them coming from "out of nowhere," although it may often seem that way to people unfamiliar with the phenomenon.

On a more theoretical note, Duncan provided an overview of the concepts media educators in Ontario considered in developing their media education curriculum [see BOX 1].

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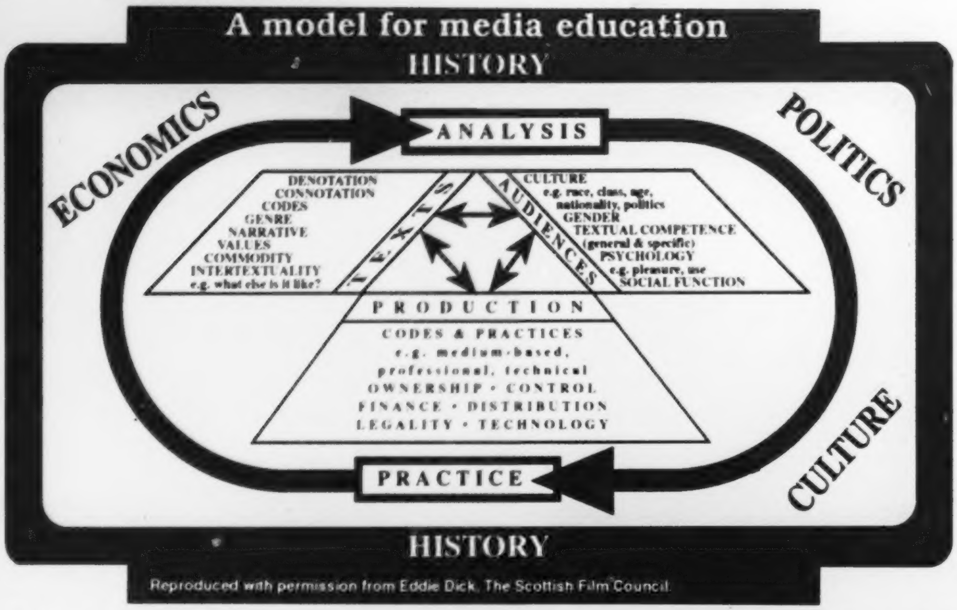
SPECIAL SECTION

Highlights from "Constructing culture: Media education in the 1990's"

The second North American conference on media education

Pages 6 - 9

A model for media education


HISTORY
ECONOMICS
POLITICS
CULTURE
ANALYSIS
DENOTATION
CONNOTATION
CODES
GENRE
NARRATIVE
VALUES
COMMODITY
INTERTEXTUALITY
e.g. what else is it like?
TEXTS
AUDIENCES
CULTURE
e.g. race, class, age, nationality, politics
GENDER
TEXTUAL COMPETENCE
(general & specific)
PSYCHOLOGY
e.g. pleasure, use
SOCIAL FUNCTION
PRODUCTION
CODES & PRACTICES
e.g. medium-based, professional, technical
OWNERSHIP • CONTROL
FINANCE • DISTRIBUTION
LEGALITY • TECHNOLOGY
PRACTICE
HISTORY

Reproduced with permission from Eddie Dick, The Scottish Film Council.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Using The Scottish Film Council"s "triangle" [see above] to illustrate how analysis and practice are related to text and audience, Duncan pointed out that the place for students to begin is by *doing* first and *analyzing* after, making a production component integral to any media education program.

Duncan ended the session by enjoining us to look at the media positively as indicators of the ways a society represents itself, its fears and desires. How the media codifies these elements becomes a part of the culture. Although it is necessary to be critical at times, he stressed that we must look for readable texts to use as teaching tools—e.g. commericals, Bart Simpson. These are the texts that produce meaning for our students, and the ablility to read and understand them is what will create a critical democracy. [JB.]

Claudia Mitchell, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, McGill University, presented a paper entitled "Michelangelo takes on Barbie, pleasure, politics, pedgagogy, and popular culture" at a conference on popular culture in Louisville, Kentucky in March 1992.

Barry Duncan was keynote speaker at Springboards '92, an annual Quebec English language arts conference, in Montreal on April 7, 1992.

BOX 1

Concepts underlying Ontario media literacy curriculum

- All media products are constructions which are shaped as a result of many decisions. Although they may *appear* to be reflections of reality, they are actually "seamless extensions of reality." Deconstruction reveals the seam.

- Audiences negotiate meaning and what individuals bring to text depends on cultural or ethnic background, age and individual experience. This points to the necessity for strategies to deal with racism, sexism, violence, bias and stereotyping.

- Mass media production has an economic base which affects content techniques and distribution.

- Tools like demographic studies, market research and bio-monitoring make ownership and control very influential.

- Ideology and values create implicit messages about consensual views or reality. This underscores the fact that texts are never neutral. The question of ideology raises the question of power and how it influences what is taken for granted and what is implicit in a media text. Central to this are decisions about what is included and what is excluded.

BOX 2

Michelangelo who?

When participants in Barry Duncan's workshop paired up to discuss signs of the media in our classrooms, my partner was an elementary school librarian who shared a delightful anecdote. It seems that a very enthusiastic little boy came to her asking for books on Michelangelo. Thrilled that he was showing such an interest in the great masters, she combed the stacks for books on Michelangelo. He, equally thrilled that so much had been written about one of his idols, wanted more. Now he wanted books on Raphael! It was at this point in the mutually exciting experience that the librarian realized that their respective cultural realities had created a communication breakdown.

This was her introduction to the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and the young man's introduction to "the real" Michaelangelo and Raphael.

It leaves teachers and parents to ponder the question of whose cultural experience is "real." JB.

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AWARDS

Montreal communication arts students win international prize

Students from the Communication Arts Department at Laurier Macdonald High School in Montreal took first prize in two categories of an international competition and exhibit of audio-visual productions entitled "Environment and mass media '92."

The competition was sponsored by the City of Sorrento Italy, the University of Naples and the Italian Center for Environmental Education. [*Media Focus* Vol.1, No. 2, Nov1991]. Students produced a video and a commercial about the deterioration of the environment.

A four-minute video, "For Love of Our Planet," was created by seven students to raise environmental awareness through images which portray a history of the planet from its beginnings to its present state of deterioration.

Another crew of thirteen produced a commercial on air pollution entitled, "It's Not Too Late." They were helped by teachers Frank Tiseo, Leon Liewellyn and Cliff Hogan.

Prizes and medals were awarded on May 23, 1992, at the Center for Environmental Studies in Sorrento, Italy.

Marshall McLuhan Distinguished Teacher Award goes to media and interdisciplinary approach to learning

Murray Newell, a biology teacher with the South Shore Protestant Regional School Board in St. Lambert, Quebec, has been awarded a 1991-92 Marshall McLuhan Distinguished Teacher Award. With school nurse Françoise Caron, Newell co-authored "The AIDS Travelling Road Show" as an approach to peer education on AIDS awareness and prevention in the high school. It includes a video and teacher's guide.

Newell says they developed the package to show how curriculum can be adapted to meet the needs and challenges of contemporary education. This model creates an interactive learning environment in which students use print and the electronic media.

In keeping with the philosophy of peer education, "The AIDS Travelling Road Show" was produced by high school students using school equipment. On the video, student peer educators share their expertise on AIDS through dramatizations, demonstrations and discussion. Newell believes the strength of this program is the range of opportunities it offers students to assimilate knowledge, attitudes and skills. Besides watching the video, learners create pamphlets, comic strips, posters, overhead transparencies, news magazines, board games and their own dramatized video productions.

The program has been used since 1989 at Lemoyne D'Iberville High School in Longueuil (QC) as an integrated model of AIDS education in the Human Biology and Moral and Religious Education (MRE) courses at the Secondary 3 (grade 9) level.

According to Newell, students exposed to the program become much more aware of AIDS-related issues than they do when presented the same information through a traditional teacher-centred lecture method.

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The virtual classroom — a pilot-project in media education

by Roxanne Deevey

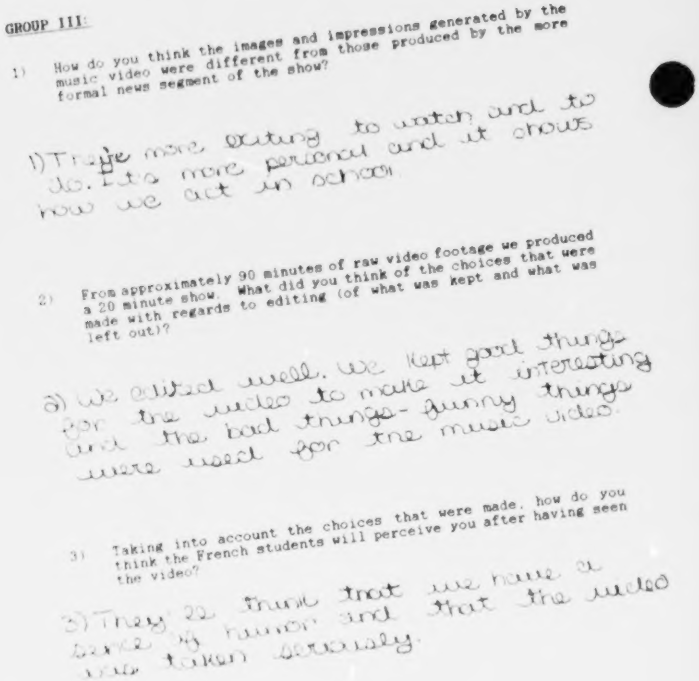
[In October 1991 Professor Dov Shinar of the Communications Department of Concordia University in Montreal proposed a pilot project in media literacy to the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal. The on-going project was launched in January1992 linking a class of fourteen French immersion students at Lachine High School, in the Montreal suburb of Lachine, with a classroom in Dourdan, a largely rural town north of Paris. This was done with the assistance of Odile Chenevez at the Centre de Liaison d'Education et Moyens d'Information (CLEMI) in France. ed.]

Background

The mass media play a significant role in informing the world, so it is essential that people understand not only the language of the media,— images and sound— but also their impact on perceptions and behavior. One must learn to "read" the media to be media literate, and this involves understanding that media products rely on countless decisions, juxtapositions and contexts which create meaning. This literacy, as an intrinsic part of formal education, should make students more aware of media mechanisms.

The project

Through communication via electronic technology, two classrooms in different countries can virtually constitute one. Hence, the title— The Virtual Classroom— a project planned in three stages:
STAGE 1) producing and exchanging "Video Visiting Cards."
STAGE 2) establishing and maintaining E-Mail (electronic mail) between classrooms.
STAGE 3) producing and exchanging a joint newspaper using E-mail and fax.



GROUP III:

1) How do you think the images and impressions generated by the music video were different from those produced by the more formal news segment of the show?

1) They're more exciting to watch and to do. It's more personal and it shows how we act in school.

2) From approximately 90 minutes of raw video footage we produced a 20 minute show. What did you think of the choices that were made with regards to editing (of what was kept and what was left out)?

2) We edited well. We kept good things for the video to make it interesting and the bad things- funny things were used for the music video.

3) Taking into account the choices that were made, how do you think the French students will perceive you after having seen the video?

3) They'll think that we have a sense of humor and that the video was taken seriously.

In addition, questionnaires and group discussions serve as tools for observing student learning throughout the project.

Three graduate students from Concordia University's Department of Communication Studies are participating by teaching the students to use equipment and by providing theoretical background on media.

Getting started

Before receiving technical instruction in video production, both groups of students were asked to complete a questionnaire pertaining to student background and cross-cultural awareness. It

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Montreal now home to international centre of films for children and young people

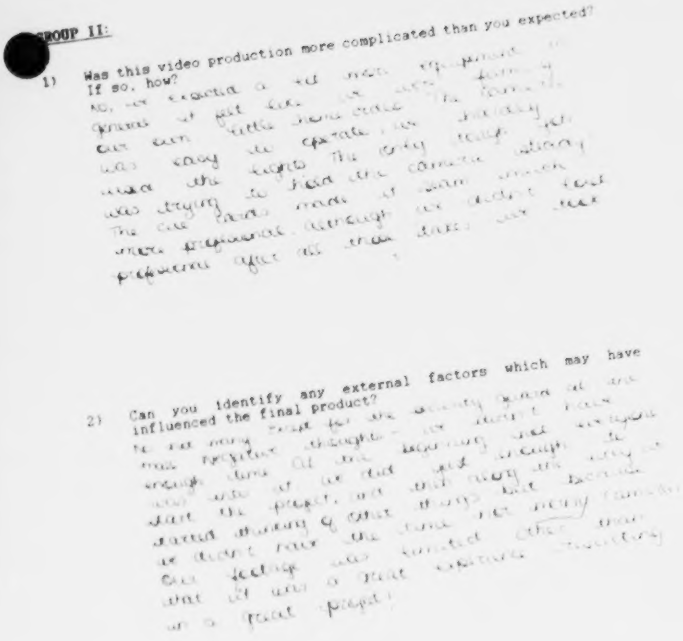
The International Centre of Films for Children and Young People, known by its French acronym, CIFEJ, was founded in 1955 under the auspices of UNESCO. After thirteen years in Brussels and twenty years in Paris, the head office is now located in Montreal.

CIFEJ subscribes to the fundamental principles of UNESCO and to the achievement of its aims by ensuring permanent international coordination of all activities concerning films and television for children.

Through member organizations in over forty countries, CIJEF undertakes the following activities:

- exchange and distribution of information (films, tv programs, video and other) about production, research, legislation and other questions relating to film and television for children and youth.
- coordination of research concerning film and television in relation to children and youth.
- development of media literacy in school settings and through extra-curricular activities.
- encouragement of the creation of new centres which share the principles and objectives outlined above.
- coordination of contacts and exchanges between countries whose activities and values reflect the philosophy of CIFEJ.

For information, contact:
CIFEJ 3773 Saint-Denis Street, Suite 102
Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2W 2M1
Tel: (514) 284-9388; Fax: (514) 284-0168



GROUP II:

1) Was this video production more complicated than you expected? If so, how?

2) Can you identify any external factors which may have influenced the final product?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

included knowledge of the other country. A media literacy component was included in the questionnaire to evaluate familiarity with different forms of the media. Only the media related to the project were addressed—print, tv and its auxiliaries (videocamera, videocassette recorder and basic production equipment), fax technologies and computers and their peripherals. On a more theoretical level, students were also asked about their use of tv and its influence.

Video visiting cards

The first stage of the project was the completion and exchange of student-produced videos which would give their audience an understanding of the social customs, interpersonal relations and community organizations of the producers. However, students soon realized that the videos could not possibly give an accurate portrayal of them or their school, and they understood that the video, as a medium, served only as a representation of their reality. This limitation, time constraints and story choices made them aware of situations faced by professionals.

The video from France was very well done. Dourdan students seemed more at ease with the camera and appeared to have access to better facilities, as they were able to include some special effects in their production. After viewing the French video, the Lachine High students discussed the two videos and the project at length.

Classroom E-Mail

Stage II of the project, the E-mail component, is underway, but thus far has not been as successful as the first stage. Difficulties have been due to the nature of the technology in this stage, which demands that users be able to overcome potential complications. Without adequate support from outside, the teacher cannot effectively carry out this kind of project, and as momentum is lost, enthusiasm wanes. For future projects, a necessary component of the planning process is either the training of teachers in technologies pertaining to the project or support from specialists in the field.

Despite some problems of logistics, there seem to be several positive results of the Virtual Classroom Project which touch not only on media literacy, but on cross-cultural awareness as well.

Teacher Louise Pelletier observed that the class has become more cohesive as a result of the experience, and the students seem to have gained self-confidence. [See sample student evaluations.]

A detailed report of the project is available at The Centre for Literacy.

Roxanne Deevey, a student in the Diploma Program in the Communication Studies Department at Concordia University, is one of the three graduate students who assisted Dr. Shinar in this project.

'Walking in Russian cinema:' theme of group tours to Moscow

The CIS Cinema Clubs' Federation is organizing a special program for groups of ten or more people interested in combining study of Soviet cinema with an opportunity to see Moscow.

This is to be an annual event during the second ten-day period of every January and April. During a one-week stay, in addition to the planned film program, participants will visit museums, exhibitions and theatres with a qualified guide/interpreter.

The Federation will offer a film program featuring a selection of Soviet films made between 1989 and 1991. These films will be screened in the Youth Palace, one of Moscow's best halls, and translated simultaneously into English, German, French, Spanish and Italian. Organizers will arrange meetings with film writers, film makers, and editorial staffs of cinema magazines, and provide tours to film studios, TV centers, and the Film Makers Union.

The cost of the program (excluding travel expenses to and from Moscow) is US $150.00 per person which includes seven days' accommodation and meals in a Moscow boardinghouse and local transportation. For an additional US $50.00, participants may visit St. Petersburg or Yaroslavi.

For information, contact:
L. Ostrovskaya,
The CIS Cinema Clubs' Federation,
Telex: 411263
Shebalin Alexander, Fax: (095) 230-2735

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Highlights from 'Constructing culture: Media education in the 1990's'

The second North American conference on media education sponsored by the Association for Media Literacy, Ontario.
University of Guelph
May 13 - 15, 1992

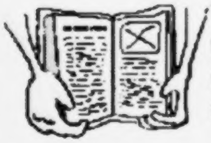
The pastoral setting of the Guelph university campus, the ideal weather and the impeccable organization and hospitality of conference chair John Pungente, SJ, and his committee made this three days the epitome of a true learning experience.

475 delegates from eight Canadian provinces, 20 US states and 15 other countries made it the largest gathering ever of media educators in the world. But as Barrie McMahon of the Western Australian Ministry of Education pointed out in one plenary address, bigger is not necessarily better and the key to this conference was not its "bigness." Its success lay in the calibre of presenters and delegates who discussed the latest developments, issues, curricula and problems in media education.

The issues of media education and gender, race and violence recurred throughout the conference. We were reminded that although we have made progress in establishing the importance of media education, this is not the time for complacency. Challenges remain in the areas of curriculum, policy and evaluation.

Media Focus has prepared the following synopses of keynote addresses and selected sessions. There will be further notes in the September issue.

PLENARY NOTES



The future-cultural studies

Keynote: Media education in Canada: A history and future directions

Speaker: Barry Duncan, President, Association for Media Literacy

History

Barry Duncan opened the conference with an historical overview of media education in Canada.

Pioneering work began in Ontario in the mid-60s when the Canadian Association for Screen Education(CASE), using mainly NFB films, promoted teaching *through* film *about* media. Well-intentioned but naive, CASE emphasized talk about social issues; their aim — to wean students away from popular culture, a case study of "How Not To" teach the media.

From 1972-77, a back-to-basics movement forced a retrenchment in media education, but in 1978, a small interest group formed the Association for Media Literacy which grew slowly to 600 members by 1985. Through active lobbying and judicious alliances during those years, AML created awareness and interest in the education ministry, and when the Ontario Ministry decided to mandate media education, the AML was asked to write the Media Literacy Resource Book. Ontario then became the only educational jurisdiction in North America to make media education compulsory.

In 1987, the University of Toronto began to offer courses for media specialists; between 1988 and 1991, five media textbooks were published, and in 1989 the Ministry Resource Guide was released to general acclaim. The AML with a current 1000 members, has sponsored two international conferences, and served as a catalyst for activity in other provinces.

Future directions

Duncan told participants that, despite the apparent progress, this is no time to be complacent. There is still much to be done, for example in lobbying against copyright laws. We also have to answer critics who label our pursuits trivial or left-wing.

With media studies often taught by English teachers, we have to guard against the tendency of this group to depoliticize media texts. This year alone, Duncan

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6

noted, several anthologies have included media as a category of text following "stories" and "poems," the accompanying activities have asked students to trace themes or pick out literary devices.

He warned against "the technicist trap" which has fomented open warfare in some schools between technical and subject departments over media education. Finally, he expressed concern about the lure of commercial advertising in the classroom, recommending caution.

He added that media education needs to be expanded across the curriculum as well as in the elementary schools; at all levels, he called for more teacher in-service and for serious attention from faculties of education.

As for new directions, Duncan pointed to the tendency to locate media studies within cultural studies which is, by its nature, cross-disciplinary; however, he stressed that its dense academic discourse must be brought to a level that teachers can understand.

In closing, Duncan suggested that while many of us look at mainstream media for our material, we should be giving greater consideration to alternative media.

Media literacy discussions, he said, may provide the only relevant instances of critical thinking that many young people experience in the classroom.

New values?
Silence
≠
Consent

Keynote:

Media and sexuality

Speaker:
Susan G. Cole, senior editor, *Now Magazine*, Toronto; author of *Pornography and the Sex Crisis.*

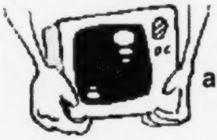
Susan Cole, addressing the issue of media and the representation of sexuality, noted that the Rodney King case reinforced our sense of the media's power to move and its capacity to be manipulated.

During the past year, three cases— Hill-Thomas, Kennedy-Smith, and Tyson-Washington — have riveted our attention and dispelled the myth that we need fear only strangers on dark streets; in each case, the victim knew the man.

Of greater concern is the sense that the distinction between sexual assault and sexuality is collapsing, with assault being perceived as sexuality. In Canada, there is legislation pending which asserts that silence does not equal consent. These are issues, Cole believes, that need to be on the public and education agendas. The vehicle is media education.

The media, she said, perpetuate dangerous sexual values such as male dominance/female submission. Ads "advertise" values as well as products. For example, there is the suggestion that women in this culture are not allowed to age, while men are. Cole suggested that the time and money spent on eroticizing dominance and power could be spent eroticizing other values.

Cole looks to the classroom as the natural setting for beginning the process for this shift in values. She noted that the most avid consumers of pornography are boys between the ages of 15 and 18; research suggests that they do want to talk about these issues. Where more logically than in media education classes?



Keynote:

Directions in media education: The Australian experience

Speakers:
Barrie McMahon and Robyn Quin, former teachers of media studies, researchers, co-authors of several media education texts

Barrie McMahon and Robyn Quin in the final keynote provided a theoretical framework grounded in the Australian experience but relevant to all the conference participants.

Goals of education

McMahon began by outlining several goals that he identifies as common to education in general and to media education in particular; these are critical analysis, critical awareness, critical autonomy, analytical skills, and literacy skills, all of which should serve the political goal of redressing the inequities that exist in society.

Evaluating media skills

In Australia, McMahon suggests, the legitimacy of media education has been established. Now there is a need to evaluate. This is driven partly by a world-wide trend toward accountability in education, but also by a need for media educators to know whether they have been achieving what they intend.

In 1991, Australia did a state-wide assessment of media analysis skills among 15-year-olds. McMahon described the development, implementation, evaluation and results of the testing program and summarized the findings.

The most significant variable was gender; girls were consistently superior. Analysis showed that neither literacy nor gender-bias in the design of the test was a determining factor. The researchers can only speculate that since girls do not have power in Australian culture, they have been trained to be more analytical of the media because they have more need to know. Conversely, boys are satisfied with the dominant male representation and do not find issues of masculinity significant.

McMahon concluded by saying that overall, Australian students have mastered lower-level skills. They are good at spotting stereotypes and points of view in the tv they watch, but 96% cannot link these to their social implications. That, he said, is the direction on which our teaching must focus.

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7

Problems/proposals

Robyn Quin continued the address by categorizing the fundamental shortcomings pointed up by the testing program. These were the social context; the ideology gap; and the non-transferability of skills. For each set of problems, she proposed some shift in teaching practice.

I. Social context

Problem

Students lack awareness and understanding of the social implications of the stereotypes they easily identify. That is they are "decoders," not analysers.

Proposal

While Quin suggested that the problem is partly attributable to maturity, she did recommend some actions. These include asking different questions that demonstrate that every text is the outcome of multiple other texts, or that ask through whose eyes/perceptions we are getting our information and representations. Through case studies, projects, we can analyze the institutions that produce mainstream ideology. And we can seek alternative images by using radical texts that cut across the mainstream.

II. Ideology gap

Problem

Students have no awareness of media as a consciousness industry.

Proposal

Teachers can use old texts. Students are better able to identify old value systems far removed from their own. If they laugh, ask "what made you laugh?" This can offer a non-threatening way into a discussion of values. Quin suggested that we find space in existing media texts and help students develop an understanding of connotations and opposition. They must be lead to understand the link between a symbol and its connotation, and to identify patterns as constructions that reflect particular points of view.

III. Transferability

Problem

Students can deconsruct images and understand symbols but cannot transfer to other situations.

Proposal

We must ask more of textual analysis. We rely too heavily on school tasks and ask too infrequently that students relate the analysis to their lives. If they leave school only able to talk about and use the texts they have learned in the classroom, we have failed. Quin also recommends more rigour in textual analysis. Ask *how* values/attitudes are presented in texts. Students ahould be encouraged to bring in their own materials. She does caution, however, the need for sensitivity in a multicultural classroom where we cannot always know where the students are coming from.

What is needed

Overall, Quin stressed that the Australian results were quite positive; students have more skills than had been credited. What is needed now :

1) To make the aims of media education clearer to teachers and students;

2) To be more direct and varied in our approaches: "texts are articulated in relation to the questions posed of them."

3) To recognize the need to evolve by questioning existing programs.

Panel: Evaluation - the key to legitimizing media education

Panelists: Vince Filo-Carroll, teacher, Simcoe [ON] County Roman Catholic Separate School Board; Judy Coghill, English consultant Peel Board, Toronto; Len Masterman, professor of media education Nottingham University, England, author of *Teaching the Media*, *Teaching About Television* and *Television Mythologies*.

Mr. Filo-Carroll began by stating his bias towards reading and writing. He pointed out that media education gives value to kids' work and stressed the need for practical work as he illustrated how producing and analyzing media products are closely related to studying traditional aspects of print. Reading is the process of decoding letters in print, and decoding images, shapes and sizes in media products.

Ms. Coghill pointed out that many teachers are uncomfortable with evaluation, perhaps because objectivity is not possible. The thrust of her presentation was that evaluation should measure learning and promote growth in students and teachers. As public accountability continues to drive much evaluation, it is important to remember our professional responsibility in the process and to understand what we're doing and why.

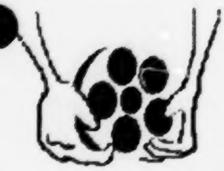
In media education, she said, the issue of credibility is not as "there" as it is in other subjects; this underlines the need to continue talking about what we're doing. Coghill provided four points to consider about evaluation in media education: 1) assessing both process and product; 2) actively engaging students in the evaluation process 3) letting students know what their teachers value; and 4) using co-operative learning to move students to independent learning. These guiding points, she said, will bring us closer to accomplishing the goals of media education which include developing self-aware students.

Len Masterman claims that questions about evaluation are really questions about curriculum, masking things that have gone wrong in establishing aims and objectives. Too often the aims of media education are "grand objectives.. couched in fuzzy terms" to serve political and/or rhetorical purposes. There should be, Masterman argues, a strong correlation between what we are evaluating and our aims. When objective are absolutely clear to both teachers and students, the appropriate tools for testing become apparent.

To help students create their "critical autonomy," Masterman points to the need to teach for transfer. If what we teach them has no effect on their daily lives, we are failing. Modes of testing, he said, shouldn't evaluate whether kids can reproduce what they learn about the media—it should be concept-based and ask whether they can apply it.

One way he sees of achieving this is to give students more power, to allow more negotiation, and to provide time every day across the curriculum for pooling and sharing perceptions of the media.

SESSION NOTES



Deconstructing documentary: Separating fact from fiction

Derek Boles, media teacher, Thornlea Secondary School, York Region Toronto.

In describing a unit on the Documentary which he teachers senior English students, Boles defined Docudrama by category and contrasted it with dramas and documentaries, showing examples of each. In his unit, students select a docudrama of their own to deconstruct. Boles assigns projects which require students to identify to what extent the docudrama is constructed in favour of drama or documentary.

Discussion turned to some of the problems with docudramas and the media which included the media's tendancy to trivialize events; to emphasize the conflict of the situation; to ignore collective social action as a solution to social problems; to virtually ignore the historic perspective; to lead people to remember the "docu" and forget the "drama".

Screen acting and the case for the practical in media education: Theory and practice

Mick Ellis, audio-visual media and technology consultant with the Saskatoon Board of Education

Ellis presented a convincing set of arguments on why teachers of media literacy should include a major practical component—i.e. hands-on production—in their courses.

As an example of how this theory might be applied, Mick "walked" participants through a unit he designed and field-tested with grade 8 students in England and Saskatchewan. The unit prepares students to produce a short original screenplay called "Murder By Pizza," and teaches them the process by which single-camera film and tv drama/comedies are constructed.

Documentary as a classroom resource

Arlene Moscovitch and David Adkin, The National Film Board

This session was a preview of the new NFB media resource package "The Documentary: Reel Life" coming out early in 1993. Consisting of a 12-hour anthology of film, excerpts, interviews and original productions (nearly all Canadian), the package focuses on ways in which film and video makers use images and sound to document and interpret reality. A users' guide will accompany the six videotapes or laserdiscs.

Reports/summaries: Judy Brandeis, Winston Emery, Linda Shohet.

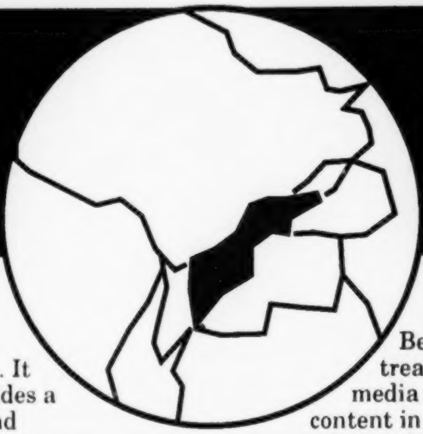
Television news: The inside track on fact versus fiction

Arnold Amber, Executive Producer, CBC News Specials.

Amber introduced the session by stating that there is no mystique about tv journalism; some of the myths attributed to the genre do exist, while others do not. He observed that many people seem to think that news "just happens," when, in fact, journalists have control in two ways—in the agenda-setting and in the gatekeeping processes.

After showing a videotape which illustrated how tv news is gathered at CBC, Amber spoke of the constraints of newsgathering which include slow news days, journalists' difficulty in achieving "objectivity" and "balanced and fair" reporting, and decisions on reporting or not reporting issues of national interest and/or security.
Amber described tv news as "telling people stories," trying to make them dramatic and reaching conclusions rather than presenting options.
Discussion touched on violent images on tv news, specifically the Rodney King beating and its aftermath, the genre of "infotainment," and the degree to which the media can contribute to the escalation of issues or act as a moderating force.

WORLD VIEW ON MEDIA EDUCATION



Focus on Israel

National Center for Media Literacy: A plan of action

Dr. Yaron Ezrahi, Professor Elihu Katz, Dr. Tamar Liebes, Mr. Avital Mossinshohn, Dr. Tsiyona Peled, Dr. Itzhak Roeh and Professor Dov Shinar comprise the team which has proposed a three-year (1991-94) plan of action for the establishment of a National Center for Media Literacy in Jerusalem.

Their ultimate goal is a curriculum that includes a series of creative learning experiences through which the concept of media literacy can be made tangible to the learner. This requires the cooperation of experienced teachers who have an interest in this area.

The team has proposed several projects that will provide first-hand experience in media education and form the core of a media literacy curriculum for students, youth groups, community centers, army education courses and new immigrants. These projects touch on diverse issues—the interaction of words and pictures, critical viewing skills, democracy and a free press, to name a few.

For information: Professor Dov Shinar, The Open University, Givat Ram, Jerusalem, Israel Fax: 02-666804.

Mochat — Israel Video Center for Education and Culture

Established in 1984 by a group with expertise in education, communications and social affairs, Mochat's main purpose is to develop and enrich the scope of education, culture and community life in Israel by producing and disseminating educational video programs. It also provides a library and guidance center to encourage their use.

Mochat activities include:

- studies carried out under the auspices of the Pedagogic Secretariat of the Ministry of Education and Culture to locate needs and establish priorities.
- a subscriber service to hundreds of member schools offering specific materials and guidance in the use of video materials in their classrooms. It also serves forty government and municipal pedagogic centers, themselves distributors of learning materials.

A media literacy curriculum for elementary schools in Israel

Recognizing that the State of Israel is undergoing a media revolution, the government has created a program in media education for elementary students. The stated aims are "to prepare students for a more democratic society, to help students understand and confront issues of social value, to advance educational instruction and to develop students' cognitive skills and expressive abilities in various media languages."

Because the treatment of media and its content in Israel necessarily involves participants in political, ideological and values issues, curriculum developers believe their programs must reflect the social reality. They propose that a media education curriculum should evaluate students' ability to analyze media content, their awareness of its relevance to their lives, and their ability to recognize issues as presented in the media as socio-cultural messages.

For information:
Dr. Dafna Lemish, The New School of Media Studies, College of Business Administration, 9, Shoshana Persitz St. Kyriat Hachinuch, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Recent educational and production projects of Mochat:

- Video and Choreography - a multi-phase educational process for enhancing the creation of videodance in Israel.
- "So Close and Yet So Far" (22 minutes) - twenty-four high school students, Israeli-born and new Russian immigrants, worked together as a creative team to produce this documentary video on the subject of social absorption.
- Study Kit in Current Affairs - daily news, covering selected issues, is re-edited by media experts and educators to form a video periodical for use in junior and senior high schools. It explains current affairs processes and relates the events to concepts in the social studies curriculum. The kit comes with a guidebook.

For information: Dr. Tsiyona Peled, P.O. Box 3649, 91033, Jerusalem, Israel Fax 972-3-617522

Reviews

SUSAN B. NEUMAN
Literacy IN THE TELEVISION AGE
Beauty Myth
ROBERT KARL MANOFF AND MICHAEL SCHUDSON, EDITORS
READING THE NEWS
A PANTHEON GUIDE TO POPULAR CULTURE

Reading the News

ed. by Robert Manoff
& Michael Schudson.
Pantheon Books
(New York, 1986) 246 pp.

This collection of articles is written by six people, all of whom have wide experience in print media as educators and/or practitioners. They approach the traditional "5 W's and H" in an untraditional manner; each contributor deals with one of these principles of journalism. The book, directed to an audience of teachers or advanced students, reflects American culture referring mostly to events which occured in the U.S.; however, the references are familiar and accessible to readers. [J.B.]

The Beauty Myth,

by Naomi Wolfe.
Vintage Books (Toronto, 1990) 291pp.
reviewed by Dorothy Nixon

Women work harder than men and always have. This is a cross-cultural fact, according to Naomi Wolfe in her controversial book, *The Beauty Myth*, and it is a fact that is not lost on those who wield power in our society.

It only follows, then, that the mass media's ubiquitous ideal—that pneumatic, yet pencil-thin, eighteen-year-old, computer-enhanced "humanoid" female is no mere coincidence. It is not just a clever consumer age ploy to get the round, fleshy women of the world to spend vast amounts of money on products they don't really need. Her existence, Wolfe argues, is a calculated strategy to keep the female population's considerable energies focused on ultimately unattainable goals so that they don't threaten the male power structure.

The beauty myth keeps women poor intellectually and economically, Naomi Wolfe contends. It also works to divide us from one another in exhausting competition for male approval.

Few can deny the evidence this 27-year-old Rhodes Scholar and recovered anorexic presents in her exhaustively researched book. (Who can deny that the ideal woman is becoming thinner and thinner?)

There is one point, however, where Ms. Wolfe's argument seems to fail for many editorialists as well as ordinary folk in the audience of talk shows like "Oprah Winfrey"; this is with her claim that the beauty myth exists to keep women powerless. "For isn't this all natural?" they ask. "Aren't women willing accomplices?" Aren't women, especially as portrayed in popular culture through the mass media, inherently narcissistic, masochistic and passive?

Dorothy Nixon is a journalist and communications consultant in Montreal.

Literacy in the Television Age,

by Susan B. Neuman,
Ablex Publishing Corporation, (New Jersey 1991) 230pp.

This book provides an overview of theories and research developed over the last twenty-five years on television and children. Neuman informs readers of both positive and negative responses taken by the researchers such as Postman, Gerbner, Salomon, Winn, and Boorstin, among others. In her closing chapters, she takes a positive position about tv's influence on children and alerts readers to the still untapped potential of the medium. [J.B]

Media/Impact

by Shirley Biagi,
Wadsworth Publishing Company, (Belmont, California. 1992).

The second edition of this classroom text introduces students to a study of the media. It is appropriate at the senior secondary and junior college levels. [J.B]

"Writing Style Differences in Newspaper, Radio and Television News", Irving Fang, Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of Writing Monograph Series No. 1, 1991.

This monograph is a collection of practical approaches to writing for each medium. Information is presented in a simple, direct manner, making it a useful "how to" guide. [J.B.]

Conferences/ events

The 12th Annual Summer Institute of Film and Television
June 14 - 19, 1992
Algonquin College
Ottawa, Ontario
For information: Tom Shoebridge, Algonquin College, 140 Main Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 1C2
Phone: (613) 598-4530; Fax (613) 598-4531

National Council of Teachers of English
Conference on Media and Language Arts
June 26 - 28, 1992
Annenberg Center
University of Pennsylvania
Keynote: George Gerbner, Dean Emeritus, Annenberg School of Communication.

Study British Media
(6 Undergraduate credits)
July 1 - 31, 1992
Sesssions feature the press and broadcasting of Great Britain and British Film/Theatre.
For information: Dr. Robert Greenberg, School of Communication and Theatre, Temple University, Philadelphia, P.A., 19122.
Tel. (215) 787-1902.

Melodrama: An International Conference and Festival (British Film Institute)
July 5 - 11, 1992
London, England.
For information: Alpa Patel (Melodrama), Education Department, British Film Institute,
21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL.

Communication For A New World
XVIII Conference and General Assembly of the International Association for Mass Communciation Research
August 16 - 21, 1992
Sao Paolo, Brazil

CIFEJ (The International Center of Film for Children and Young People)
General Assembly
September 19 - 23, 1992
Rimouski, Quebec.

CIFEJ Colloquium
"Children, Moving Images, and Their Future"
September 24 - 25, 1992
Montreal, Quebec.
For information: Connie Tadros, CIFEJ, 3774 rue Saint-Denis, #102, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2W 2M1
Tel. (514) 284-9388 Fax (514) 284-0168.

The International Visual Literacy Association Annual Conference
"Imagery in Science and the Arts"
Sept. 30 - Oct. 4, 1992
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
For information: Dr. Barbara Seels, Instructional Design and Technology, 4A16 Forbes Quadrangle, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, Tel: (412) 648-7338; FAX (412) 648-5911.

Australian Teachers of Media
7th Annual National Media Education Conference 1992
"Facing the Future"
October 1 - 4, 1992
Perth, Western Australia.

Second International Conference on Three-Dimensional Media Technology
3DMT '92
November 3 - 5, 1992
Sheraton Centre Hotel
Montreal, Quebec
For information: Hal Thwaites, Department of Communication Studies, Concordia Unversity, 7141 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec. FAX: (514) 848-3492; E-Mail: Hal@VAX2 Concordia CA.

Selected new resources

New books:

The following books on media and popular culture have reently been added to the collection. Books may be borrowed on two-week loan.

- Chomsky, Noam. *The Chomsky Reader*, edited by James Peck. Pantheon Books. Random House (New York, 1987). 492 pp.
- Grossberg, Lawrence and Cary Nelson, Paula Treichler. *Cultural Studies*. Routledge (New York, 1992). 730 pp.
- Lusted, David. *The Media Studies Book: A Guide for Teachers*. Routledge (London and New York, 1991). 234 pp.
- McMahon, Barrie & Robyn Quin. *Stories & Stereotypes; A Course in Mass Media*. Longman Cheshire (Australia, 1988). 204 pp.
- McMahon, Barrie & Robyn Quin. *Real Images: Film & Television.*. The Macmillan Company of Australia (Australia, 1991). 242 pp.
- Olalquiaga, Celeste. *Megalopolis: Contemporary Cultural Sensibilities*. University of Minnesota Press (Minneapolis, 1992). 112 pp.
- Postman, Neil. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*. Alfred A. Knoff (New York, 1992). 222 pp.
- Radway, Janice A. *Reading the romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. The University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill and London, 1991). 276 pp.
- Schiller, Herbert I. *Culture Inc*. Oxford University Press (New York, 1989). 201 pp.
- Twitchell, James B. *Carnival Culture*. Columbia University Press (New York, 1992). 306 pp.

BARRIE McMAHON
& ROBYN QUIN
REAL IMAGES
Film & Television
TECHNOPOLY

FALL 1992 Vol. 8 No. 3

Literacy across the curriculum

Connecting literacy in the schools, community and workplace

Literacy lessons from history

[International perspectives on urban adult literacy was the theme of a UNESCO conference held at the U.N. in August . Two hundred fifty delegates listened to four days of presentations by researchers and practitioners from the industrialized and Third World. Many questioned the tendency to generalize from country to country and setting to setting. The first keynote highlighted below was given by historian Harvey Graff. Notes from selected sessions appear on pages 10-11.]

INTERNATIONAL URBAN ADULT LITERACY CONFERENCE
UNITED NATIONS · AUGUST 3–6, 1992

Following an official from Canada Post who presented the UNESCO conference organizers with copies of the now-famous lithograph of the"bird" representing literacy as a "flight for freedom," Harvey Graff, in his keynote address, suggested that this metaphor threatens to take us out of touch with the "foundations" of the issue.

As a social historian and student of literacy for more than two decades, Graff set out to bring the discussion back to earth, to provide some critical/historical "grounding" for further deliberations.

Crisis and decline

Graff cannot remember when literacy was not a "crisis;" across centuries, he can trace a continuing discourse of crisis and decline. He distinguished three among many strands that inform the current debate — first, the concept of elementary or basic literacy that underlies the testing drive to measure school literacy and functional abilities; second, the presumed connection between the condition of literacy and the condition of civilization (democracy, progress) when fears about literacy mirror fears about the social order; third, the concept of many literacies (beyond the traditional alphabetic) and the proliferation of new "literacies," to which in 1992 alone have been added "emotional literacy," "ecological literacy," "teleliteracy," and "food literacy."

Each of these strands, Graff suggests, has its own developed rhetoric of crisis and decline, none freely interchangeable with the other. This understanding provides some sense of how difficult it is to deal with literacy. In order to reconstruct a workable model of literacy, he draws lessons from history pointing out myths that get in the way of clear thinking. Among them are:

continued on page 2

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13 **Announcements**
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15 **Conferences**

The Centre for Literacy Montreal, Quebec

continued from page 1

Myth: Subjects such as literacy, learning, schooling and education are simple unproblematic notions.

"Not so," argues Graff. This idea ignores the fundamental complexity of each and the heated debate that surrounds such questions as language acquisition, written vs. oral communication, or the relationship of literacy to social, economic, and political development. Even elementary alphabetic literacy is immensely complex. Yet we continue to talk about "simple reading and writing" adding to the sense of inadequacy often felt by those who did not master these skills in their childhood.

Our presumption of the simplicity of literacy accompanies our notion of universal outcomes which rest far more on expectation and faith than on historical evidence. Graff warns of the risks of exaggerating or inflating expectations of increased literacy.

Myth: There is a simple dichotomy between rural and urban literacy.

On the contrary, there are twisted links between cities and literacy. At times, urbanization has been a cause of increased literacy; at times, not. Graff notes that historians have traced the progress of alphabetization in French cities between the 16th and 19th centuries. While the Revolution sparked a faith that the gathering together of people would foster the spread of education, the reality was that results were mixed and varied.

The factors include cultural composition and mix of classes as well as the size of the urban setting. Beyond a population size of 10,000 - 20,000, "literacy begins to slither backwards." Even within cities, levels differ from place to place with respect to economics, ethnicity, and gender.

Cities both push populations towards rising levels of literacy and simultaneously push them away. Usually, although not always, they do offer more opportunities, print is more ubiquitous, and work is available. On the other hand, cities often have overcrowded institutions, and fewer and less adequate ways of surviving. Evasion of compulsory schooling is easier, and at least in contemporary North American cities, it is easier to get information by means other than print.

Graff suggests that survival in the city may depend on the ability to "read the city" far more than on print literacy.

Myth: Literacy is neutral and beneficial.

No mode of learning is neutral. There are always biases with respect to transmission, e.g. the textual bias of school literacy. In making explicit written prose the model of literacy, we have downgraded the other modes of communication. Most of what we mean by school literacy involves a narrow conception of decontextualized words.

Overvaluing alphabetic literacy has had massive human costs. It has meant valuing the technology of the intellect over the human spirit. Rationalism has lead to the reification of the written over the oral, the schooled over the unschooled. Ironically, historians of science now suggest that invention and discovery often depend more on visual abilities. It will be difficult for us to expand our notions of literacy, Graff says, without understanding the broader contexts of communication.

That will only happen when we recognize that 19th century disciplines have outlived their usefulness, and break the traditional disciplinary barriers. He cites Henry Giroux's claim that reconsituting literacy means reconstituting the entire post-secondary endeavour (see p.3). An historical education calls for curricula that cultivate consciousness, remembrance and imagination. It is only within such a framework that literacy can be understood and advanced.[L.S.]

Suggested readings by Harvey Graff:

- *The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth-Century City* (1979, 1991).
- *Literacy in History: An Interdisciplinary Reserach Bibliography* (1981).
- *The Labyrinths of History*: Reflections on Literacy Past and Present (1987).
- with Robert Arnove, *National Literacy Campaigns:* Historical and Comparative Perspectives (1987)

Harvey Graff will animate a seminar entitled "Literacy myths and legacies: lessons from history" on April 1, 1993, 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at The Centre. For information: (514) 931-8731, local 1415.

Literacy Across the Curriculum
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1 On the first principle of Postmodern Literacy

My case for the immediacy of literacy in the postmodern era is based on two points, one practical and one philosophical. The first is that the written word pervades the media today. The second is that postmodern thinkers have made text the central tool for understanding how the world is put together. Let me explain how both of these amount to an expansion of the word and our understanding of what it might mean to be a student of literacy.

On one level, we continue to read this Image World, and do so by virtue of the very skills that drive the reading lessons that we have taught the young for years, lessons in inference, deduction, and hypothesis-testing. The Image World certainly calls for the constant application of irony and skepticism. But you may say that this is reading in a metaphorical sense. And I would reply that, in a literal sense, with the pun intended, this Image World is exceedingly scripted. Teletransmissions are written out first. The word moves through a dozen hands, from script to teleprompter, from the eyes of the reader to our ear as we sit propped up before the television set at the end of the day. As it now stands, we are read to constantly by the media, like the patient children of attentive parents. Bedtime stories. Can we get to sleep without them?

At the heart of this teletransmission culture is the written word, draft by draft, as it is composed, rehearsed, and revised to maximize its effect. Postmodernism is post-literate only in this sense of the word writ large, only as it extends literacy beyond the page. Postmodernism may well be, as Andrew Ross has put it, "the continuation of modernism by other means," but then it is also the continuation of literacy by other means. Electronic technology has given the written word much greater power, that many more channels to proliferate.

John Willinsky, "Postmodern Literacy: A Primer,"* *Our Schools / Our Selves*, April 1992, pp. 35 -36.

* *A must-read essay for anyone interested in the changing dimensions of literacy and the possibilities for new forms of schooling.*

2 On *Pygmalion* as a literacy narrative

To Henry [Higgins], Eliza knows nothing and is worth nothing: "She's so deliciously low – so horribly dirty." In the figure of Henry, Shaw mirrors, albeit in exaggerated form, a characteristic trait of educational narratives: the progress plot. By constructing some sort of low starting point (a pretest), Eliza's education and his sterling performance as a teacher can later be measured (posttest); her performance can be "assessed." Consequently, everything she knows she owes to Henry; she is filled up with his knowledge. And so it is not surprising that Henry flirts with the idea of himself as an artist, the creator of something from nothing. Yet Shaw denies Henry this status by identifying his gestures with another mode of creation, that of fathering, which in turn, the play associates with bullying. Henry works through paternalistic condescension and threats, seeing education as a system of ownership and orders. Henry can assume his fatherly stance because Eliza has no family, as he defines it, or at least has no family that she should want to belong to. Oddly enough, here we see played out in a British text written early in the century what many consider a new American argument: that the rise in illiteracy is in part connected to the demise of the family in the United States. Henry can justify his experimentation with Eliza because her "family" does not meet his definitions...

Jane Carey Eldred & Peter Mortensen, "Reading Literacy Narratives," *College English*, Volume 54. Number 5, September 1992, pp.518-519.

3 On values in the classroom

Author & teacher
Henry Giroux

The real issue is not whether you are value-free or full of values, but that you are always aware of the politics of your position and how those values relate to the greater community. We need to model for students a relationship between our teaching and some sort of vision, because schools always predispose a vision of the future, and nobody's going to get away from that. I think that you can do that without committing a kind of teacher terrorism. To say that values matter is not to say that "you have to believe in my values." It's to say that "you have to come out of this classroom believing that you have to make choices and that those choices have consequences." That's a condition for critical autonomy.

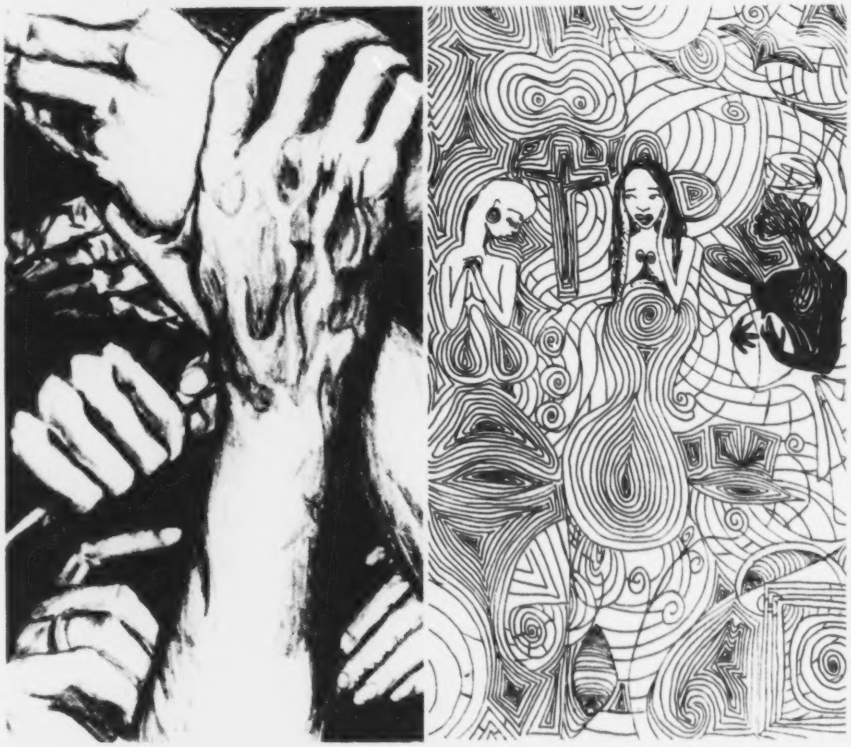
Henry Giroux, "Schooling for Citizenship," interview by Kathleen Tyner, *Strategies*, Volume 5, Number 4, Fall 1992, Strategies for Media Literacy, Inc, p.2.

Drawing/literacy project wins grant and award

The Centre for Literacy is pleased to announce that it has received both a grant from the Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy Foundation and the 1992 Lydia Burton Award* from the Freelance Editors' Association of Canada to publish a book that links drawing and literacy.

The developmental work on this project was carried out in winter 1992 by Dawson teacher and artist Catherine Bates in collaboration with Linda Shohet through support from The Resource-Teacher project at The Centre. It was outlined in the May issue of *LAC* "In the Classroom" (pp.6-7).

The grant and award will allow us to publish a selection of student drawings and writing with a brief background paper and practical suggestions for teachers. Publication is slated for June 1993.



*** The Lydia Burton Award**

This award to encourage literacy projects was established to honour the memory of Lydia Burton after her death in April 1990. Burton was a freelance editor, feminist, and humanitarian known for her egalitarian and socialist perspectives. With a strong commitment to the cause of literacy, she was chair of the Grants Committee of the Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy Foundation, when it was first established. She was also an active executive member of the Freelance Editors' Association of Canada and chaired a committee that produced Editing Canadian English, a guide to Canadian English usage.

CORRECTION
May 1992 issue

An article entitled "Business-education partnerships that work," (p.10), indicated that E.R.I.C., a workplace literacy project of Syncrude Canada and Keyano College, had won an award from the Conference Board of Canada in May 1992. In fact, they did not win an award, but were highlighted in a special session at the Calgary conference as one of twelve Innovative Projects That Work.

LAC regrets the error but hopes that it serves as a prophecy of the recognition due an outstanding Canadian program.

– Literacy in the Phys Ed classroom

Sculpting gender: Media, muscle and the construction of 'fit' bodies

[The materials highlighted in this issue were presented at the Guelph conference on media literacy in May 1992 by Margaret Macneill of the School of Physical and Health Education, University of Toronto. She organized the workshop around the idea that the media "sculpt" gendered images of young adults engaged in physical activity as portrayed in fitness videos, television exercise shows, 'muscle mags,' aerobic trade journals and action advertising. Ms.Macneill shows physical education (and other) teachers how to use media literacy teaching strategies to help students become aware of these social constructions, to help develop students' analytic abilities and to empower them to make healthier lifestyle choices. Below are samples of some of the concepts and techniques that Macneill has developed.] [L.S.]

To explore:

- The media construct a narrow range of "appropriate" physical uses of the body and of "appropriate" ways for teens to spend their leisure time.

- Differentiate between sex and gender, the confusion of nature and culture in the realm of physical activity.

- Current media images reproduce:

  - stereotypes of feminine fitness involving the 3-Fs — **f**itness-dance, **f**ear of fatness, and **f**antasy of sex-appeal.
  - stereotypes of masculine fitness perpetuating the 3-Ms — **m**acho, **m**uscle, **m**oves.

- There are wider consequences to standardized images of fitness:
  - participation rates and choices
  - ulterior motives for participating
  - the ideology of "healthism:" does ultra fitness = health?
  - the celebrity-expert phenomenon: star power, plastic bodies, unreal expectations
  - gender differences mildly fluctuate while the basic cultural gap is maintained and legitimated
  - political, economic, social: health potential, life-choices, consumption patterns

Analytic aerobic workouts, selected questions, activities

De-construction: involves breaking apart the collection of media techniques into categories, i.e. narrative themes, editing and camera angles, etc. in order to foreground the cultural choices made by producers and the intent to "naturalize" one meaning out of a range of possibilities.

- What title has been chosen to anchor the broadcast, article, or ad?
- How many pages/broadcast minutes are devoted to sport/fitness vs. advertising?
- How many women's vs men's events are covered? What range of fitness activities is offered to males and females?
- Print: compare choice of words, use of graphics, location of titles, logos, photos.
- Visual : lighting, background, framing, colour, camera angles, focus, camera scan...
- Auditory: arena noise, music, commentator's speech patterns and word choice, coach/athlete's speech.

Moving to re-construction

- Who is the intended audience?
- What is the key message? different layers of meaning?
- Who is the voice of authority?
- Are males and females portrayed in different roles?
- Do athletes appear in aesthetically-pleasing poses and movement patterns, athletically-pleasing, or sexually provocative?

Re-connection: locates the media text within broader social structures such as the fitness and sporting goods marketplace, gender relationships, health patterns...

At this stage teachers can insert material on human sexuality, health issues such as eating disorders or inactivity, teenage growth and development, ethnicity and culturally based movements, race and myths of the "natural athlete," violence in sport, athletic heroes and AIDS, etc...

- How does this image of activity differ from images in old magazines, videos, or newspapers?

Suggested class activity:

Have students play current rules basketball and a few minutes of turn-of-the-century "girls rules." This will help remind us that "preferred images" of activity in the media and preferred practices in our gyms have been historically developed and can be changed to suit current needs.

For more ideas, contact:
Margaret Macneill, School of Physical and Health Education, University of Toronto,
320 Huron Street, Toronto, Ontario,
M5S 1A1, Tel: (416) 978-0598.
Other materials on phys. ed.
are available at The Centre for Literacy.

Media representations of literacy: NFB 1992

reviews of

- ***A Passage from Burnt Islands***
- ***Ellen's Story***

A Passage from Burnt Islands
The story of a one man literacy crusade which grew to include an entire community
ABCDEFGHIJKL

Literacy, as popularly understood, does not lend itself to dramatization. It is always most compelling to tell a personal story; but it is also easier to feed on and preserve the stereotypes than to explore the subtleties and incongruities of literacy as it manifests itself in real lives and spaces.

The National Film Board released three literacy films in 1992, two hour-long documentaries and one animated short film, which tried to push beyond the received. It rates an "A," and a "B-" for *A Passage from Burnt Islands* and *Ellen's Story*.

In *A Passage from Burnt Islands,* director Alan Handel has portrayed the social, economic, and cultural dimensions of literacy through the story of an inspired teacher and school principal who transforms not only a single school but an entire community. Burnt Islands is an economically depressed Newfoundland fishing village whose bleak future is belied by the surrounding beauty of sea and rock. As the cod fisheries die, the people lose their only source of livelihood and come face to face with their lack of education and training to do anything unconnected to the sea.

Burnt Islands had one of the worst schools in Canada. Most of its elementary graduates could barely read or write. Few continued on to high school; of those, even fewer finished. There was no incentive, the teachers were tired and working on automatic, the parents had no role at all in their children's education.

Enter Ray Bown, native islander, son of a fisherman, the only educated member of his family, dedicated to learning. A teacher who takes over as principal in Burnt Islands, Bown within less than a year engages the children and their parents in his vision of a community that can take control of its destiny through education.

He inspires the teachers, shows the children that they can learn, and that books are a pleasure, assures the parents that their children have a future and that parental support is needed and welcome. Without any visible resources, the parents take the challenge, give their time, raise money with sales and dances to buy equipment and books, and take responsibility not only for the school but for the continuity of Burnt Islands itself.

Ray Bown, in Montreal in September to launch this film, spoke to a group of teachers. With humility and candor, he talks about his work and tells his audience "If you no longer feel a passion when you walk into the classroom, find another profession."

A Passage from Burnt Islands was shot before the closing of the cod fisheries this past summer, so it impossible to know whether the faith in Bown will survive or whether the community itself will come through. Many of the children interviewed on screen were already saying that they did not expect to remain in Burnt Islands when they grew up; but most of them did expect to stay in Newfoundland. What is powerful about the story is the inherent vision that the salvation of any community lies within itself; that its future is rooted in its own culture and any successful development must respect the literacies of both community and school.

From the National Film Board of Canada
Ellen's Story
A film about generational illiteracy and how a family can be imprisoned in poverty because it is unable to cope in a society which demands higher literacy skills every year
Ellen's Story

Ellen's Story has a narrower focus on one woman's struggle to literacy. That narrowness is its weakness. In glossing over the social and cultural implications that assert themselves in almost every frame, the film distorts what otherwise attempts to be a sensitive portrayal. It buys into many of the literacy myths identified by Harvey Graff (p.1).

Ellen Szita is a middle-aged, formerly middle-class, mother of four, reformed alcoholic, and secret illiterate. She grew up in working-class England, had limited access to schooling in a classbound society and suffered from learning problems. Her father, absent at sea for most of her formative years, terrorized the family when he finally returned home as a stranger to his children. Her mother was frequently ill, forcing Ellen and her siblings to spend some months of their lives in a Dickensian foster institution where she was physically and psychologically abused. From interviews with her mother, brother, and sister, it is clear that there is a congenital learning disability in the family (perhaps dyslexia); none of them ever learned to read. Yet the film would suggest that all Ellen's later problems are attributable to her "dark secret"–illiteracy.

Several times the film teeters on the brink of the maudlin—for, oh, how much can one woman suffer? There is alcoholism, lost children, school drop-out, broken marriage, a religious conversion and just when she seems to have overcome the worst, she discovers a malignant lump in her breast. All attributable to her illiteracy.

The language and images in the opening shots confirm old stereotypes without intention. It is a language of despair and darkness; illiteracy is descibed as a jailer, a thief. Ellen accepts blame for all the ills that befall her family, especially for her children's failure in school. Where was and where is her husband? Did he play no role in his childen's lives and education? Is this another case of what Hannah Fingeret (p.10) calls the tendency to blame women for conditions they did not create, making them solely responsible for the literacy/success of their children?

It would be unfair not to mention the strengths of *Ellen's Story*. It offers an accurate portrayal of the sense of isolation, of feeling stupid and inadequate, of being ashamed, shared by many who cannot read or write well in a society that demands literacy for survival. It also presents a picture of the long struggle that an adult student faces in pursuing literacy and further education. Ellen is shown taking three years just to complete her high school equivalency before continuing. The job she finally gets is only a low-paying apprenticeship —no illusions, guarantees or magic here.

But in the end, the documentary avoids the hard questions that it indirectly raises. Do what degree was Ellen's lack of childhood opportunity determined by culture and class in England forty years ago? What opportunities are available to working-class children in Canada today? Given that learning disabilities are now more openly recognized, are there resources and will to respond? What kinds of jobs are available for women like Ellen and women in worse positions? What about the new generation of drop-outs and graduates pushed through school with literacy levels no higher than Grade 7? What kinds of jobs will they have? Without confronting issues of class, culture, or gender, *Ellen's Story* glosses only the surface of Ellen's story.

Despite the shortcomings, this film is effective in generating response. An entire course on dimensions of literacy could be sustained from its explicit and implicit messages. [L.S.]

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Economic consequences of literacy

Richard Darville, Carleton University, Ottawa

Researcher Richard Darville, who has been tracking literacy as a Canadian public policy issue for almost two decades, has noted a shift of emphasis. While the idea of literacy as a human right connected to social justice has become part of the popular discourse, there has been a growing preoccupation with the economic consequences.

A few years ago that preoccupation revealed itself as an emphasis on the costs to government of social assistance, welfare, prisons; now the central term is competitiveness, shifting the focus to people on the job and their ability to adapt to organizational and technological change. Another variation takes it to national levels, insisting that those nations that implement new technologies most effectively will surge ahead. There are positive and negative implications to this shift, says Darville.

On the negative side, it could reinforce a narrow, competency-based focus on the specific skills required for specific tasks. The 20th century has witnessed a history of deskilling to reduce training time to a minimum. For example, in the textile industry, the literacy component might mean merely taking a tag from one piece of the garment and attaching it to a form (inventory control) or signing a form acknowledging a mistake. In another domain, smelting companies have been systematically reorganizing work so that memorizing has replaced craft.

On the positive side, there is a promise of new resources for training and development. With worker autonomy and team-based responsibility being promoted, there would be an obvious need for expanded skills and abilities. However, Darville points out that the ground is contested; it is far from clear that most employers will allow workers this power.

Finally, there is an additional danger that public policy on literacy will focus only on the workplace and that the rest of the literacy endeavour will be forced to make do with extremely limited resources. He suggests, however, that it is still possible for literacy advocates to insert their voices in the debate and insist on the wisdom, even for economic goals, of producing a highly literate population.

Alternatives: assessing literacy stories

Stan Jones, Centre for Adult Literacy, Carleton University, Ottawa

Assessing student progress in meaningful terms continues to defy literacy teachers. While standarized tests do not give students usable information about their learning, funders want something more than anecdotal reports about students' personal goals.

After working for years on both formal and informal literacy assessment, Stan Jones has recently been exploring ways of formalizing the informal. He argues that the stories students tell about themselves reveal a great deal about their literacy. For example, one 70-year-old woman who had just completed a basic math program proudly recalled a recent shopping trip when she had caught an error in a bill at The Bay. That story reveals not only a gain in skill but also a gain in self-confidence that allowed the woman to question the salesclerk.

Unfortunately, funding agencies have no way of using such stories. So Jones has been studying ways to interpret stories to show something concrete about literacy gains. The context for this research has come from a program in Ontario that is trying to get dislocated workers (e.g. gunsmiths) into retraining without lengthy prerequisites. Many of these people have to "recover" or "discover" their literacy.

Jones constructs scales of difficulty for particular tasks that are required for particular jobs; then he listens to stories students tell about what they actually do or can do. He develops test items from these stories and shows students how to match story and scale. The method holds much promise, he believes, of meshing student needs with bureaucratic demands.

Stan Jones will present a workshop on assessing literacy stories at The Centre for Literacy from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. on November 18, 1992. Details: 931-8731, local 1415.

'Born lucky'

**Hannah Fingeret , Executive Director,
Literacy South, Durham, North Carolina**

"Born lucky" is how Hannah Fingeret described herself in a presentation called "Women, Words, amd Power." She shared her reflections "as a woman involved in literacy over a lifetime."

Coming from a comfortable, supportive family who encouraged her to believe that she could be whatever she chose to be, Hannah knows she was "born lucky." The refrain has characterized many of her life experiences. Having a high school teacher who recognized and nurtured her love of science was another stroke of "luck," getting a first-rate education another. It was only in college, after working as a volunteer literacy tutor with welfare women, that Hannah shifted her ambitions from science to literacy. She has never looked back.

She still finds that too often literacy education for women teaches them how to keep their places, how to work in the system, rather than how to question what jobs are available. Too often, they are taught to serve, not to lead.

Although the labels on literacy have changed—now "family literacy" is valorized— Hannah finds practices largely unchanged. "Family literacy" targets women and warns them, "Your children will fail unless you come to school." Many programs are simply copies of "Survival Skills" programs from the 1960s; they imply that women are carriers and causes of illiteracy rather than caught in a web of historically conditioned circumstances.

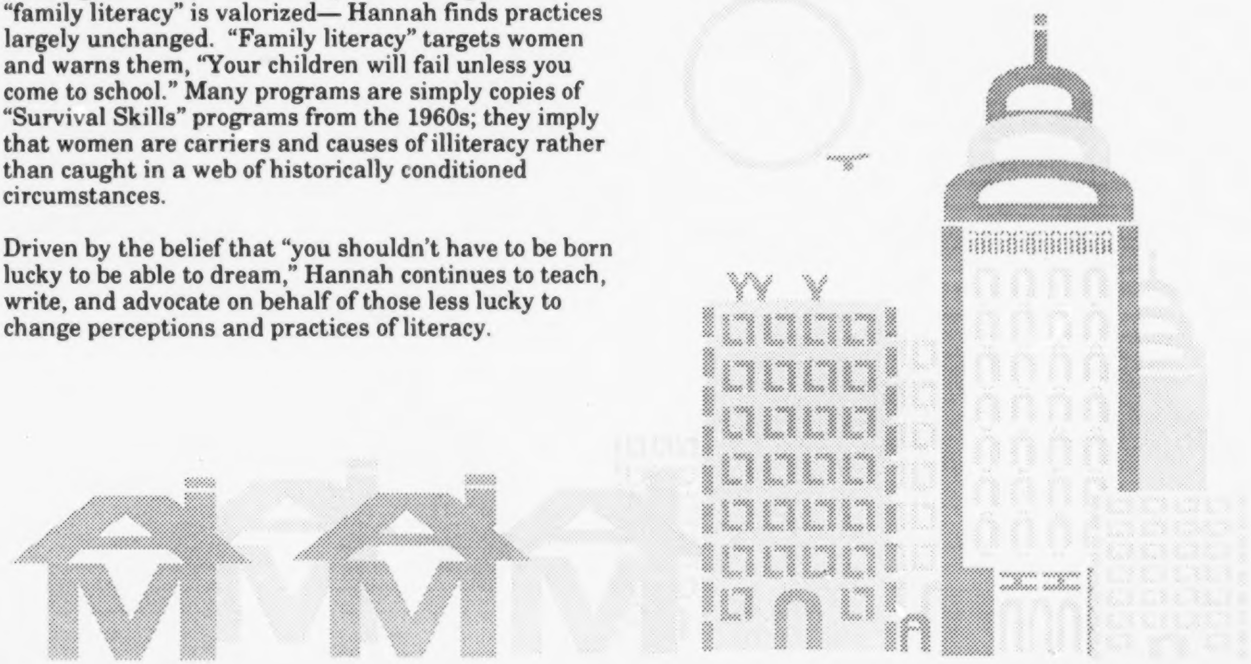
Driven by the belief that "you shouldn't have to be born lucky to be able to dream," Hannah continues to teach, write, and advocate on behalf of those less lucky to change perceptions and practices of literacy.

Literacy in multicultural multilingual settings

Serge Wagner, Université du Québec à Montréal

Drawing on the experience of francophones in Canada, Serge Wagner argued that to ensure the survival of minority cultures, literacy training must be available in mother-tongue. He distinguished between two kinds of bilingualism —positive and negative — and three types of illiteracy among francophones. One type is illiteracy in mother-tongue; another is illiteracy in first and second languages; the last is low-level literacy in both languages.

Among these, Wagner makes further distinctions. There are those who are illiterate because the minority have no access to schooling in mother-tongue; but there are those who remain illiterate as an act of resistance against the dominant language imposed on them. This, Wagner presents as positive. He suggests that the survival of the French culture in Canada was in part assured by this resistance.



Copyright: Educators meet the policymakers

On October 15, The Centre for Literacy and the Association of Teachers of English of Quebec (ATEQ) through its Academic Alliance series sponsored a panel and exchange on Canadian copyright legislation as it affects educators. The main presentation was given by Adam Ostry, Director-General, Cultural industries Policy, Department of Communications, Canada; Mr. Ostry has overseen the development and implementation of copyright legislation and is currently working on the amendments in Phase II expected to be tabled in Spring 1993. The other panelists were Sheila Finestone, MP, Mount Royal, the Liberal critic whose mandate includes copyright, and James Taylor, Chair of the Department of Communications at Université de Montréal and President of the Canadian Communications Association. Reprinted below are some of Adam Ostry's comments on what educators can look forward to in Phase II.

Amendments to copyright legislation PHASE II

The amendments will grant exceptions from certain rights accorded copyright owners for educational institutions, libraries, archival institutions, and perceptually-disabled persons...

Educational Exceptions

Educational institutions will be granted exceptions when a creation is used by an educational institution on its premises for the purposes of education or training. The scope of these exceptions will be based on the work of the consultations conducted during the lead up to C-60 as well as on the recommendations made by the consultative committees on exceptions in 1988.

There will be exceptions from the reproduction right for visual presentation of a work (e.g.writing a poem on a blackboard) and from all rights for the use of creations in examinations or dictations. This exception, as with all others, applies only to educational institutions. Hence, commercial exam-preparing businesses will not be covered by the exception.

Phase II will also include special measures respecting the performance of a work, the closed-circuit transmission on the premises of the educational institution of such a performance and the reproduction of this performance in school will all be covered by an exception. For example, this provision will permit the reading of a story to a class, the live performance of a play or the playing of sheet music on an instrument. The presence of parents during the performance will not change the nature of these exceptions provided that other conditions of the exceptions are met, including that the performance is for educational purposes.

Finally, the performance or closed-circuit transmission of a work, performer's performance, sound recording or communication signal, by means of a radio or television set will also be exempt, so long as it is done within the school for educational purposes.

Libraries and Archival Institutions

The other exceptions that will have an impact on education are those that will be accorded to libraries and archival institutions. They will be granted exceptions in order to maintain and manage their permanent collections. For fair dealing purposes, libraries and archival institutions will be permitted to do that which is necessary to enable research or study except if prohibited in a legacy, gift or other dispositions, or if the activity can be authorized by a collective or a licensing body. Libraries and archival institutions will also be able to provide patrons with one copy of certain periodical articles. Phase II will establish that libraries or archival institutions will not be contravening the Copyright Act if a reprography machine is on their premises, provided that there is a copyright warning posted near the machine. All measures proposed for libraries and archival institutions will apply to non-profit institutions, including museum, which conduct activities of a similar nature.

Permanent Consultative Committee

In order to ensure that the reform process begun in 1988 will be ongoing, the government announced in March of this year, the creation of a permanent consultative committee on copyright. The committee is comprised of interested creator and user groups as well as specialist practitoners... The committee will provide government with regular advice on copyright reform in light of technological, social and economic changes during this and subsequent phases of revision.

Mr. Ostry heard from teachers about the difficulties they now face in their daily practice because of strict interpretation or even misinterpretation of the current legislation. Some of their comments will be printed in the Winter issue. In the meantime, Mr. Ostry recommended that people who have comments or suggestions should contact their representives on the consultative committee which includes 120 national organizations; according to him, every sector of education has a voice. [L.S.]

Defining copyright

The essence of copyright is not to protect an idea, but rather its expression... Copyright embodies the legal rights of creators to control their creations and to receive compensation for the use of their works.

Copyright law allows for the exercise of economic right as well as moral rights. Economic rights may be sold, transferred or licensed by the creator to others to facilitate economic exploitation.

Moral rights encompass the right to claim authorship of one's work, and the right of integrity, that is, the right to restrain distortion of one's work. Moral rights belong to the creator and though they may be waived, they cannot be assigned to others.

Creators rely on this legal foundation which supports and protects both the integrity of their work and their financial interest.

–Adam Ostry, Montreal, October 15, 1992

Teachers and tutors

1992 - 1993

ACADEMIC ALLIANCE of ENGLISH TEACHERS

Association of Teachers of English of Quebec (ATEQ) & The Centre for Literacy, Dawson College

Lifewriting and Literacy: Creating, Telling, and Sharing the Stories of our Lives

Animator: Sydney Butler,
University of British Columbia
Date: Wednesday,
November 25, 1992
Time: 7:30 P.M. - 9:30 P.M.
Place: Dawson College, Atwater,
Rose Room, 7-C5
3040 Sherbrooke Street W.
(Atwater metro)

R.S.V.P. 931-8731, local 1415, by November 23.

1992 - 1993

Frontier College and The Centre for Literacy

Literacy and Street Youth - a Workshop

Purpose:
- To share the experience of Frontier College's Beat the Streets program in Toronto
- To give participants skills in integrating a literacy initiative into existing outreach programs for youth in the streets

Audience: Staff or volunteers from social service agencies/ projects that serve youth in Montreal

Dates: January 7-8, 1993
Place: Dawson College
Animator: Bill Worrell, Frontier College

For details of schedule and registration instructions, call 931-8731, local 1415.

ACADEMIC ALLIANCE of ENGLISH TEACHERS

Association of Teachers of English of Quebec (ATEQ) & The Centre for Literacy, Dawson College

The video camera in the classroom

"The best way to become media literate is to do." Michael Rubbo

Animator: Michael Rubbo, children's filmmaker
Date: Tuesday, January 26, 1993
Time: 7:30 P.M. - 9:30 P.M.
Place: Dawson College, Atwater Campus

Michael Rubbo, working out of Montreal, is an internationally acclaimed director of children's films including *The Peanut Butter Solution, Tommy Tricker and the Stamp Traveller,* and *Vincent and Me.* But he takes time out from his own international travel schedule to work with teachers who are educating the new generation of media consumers and media makers.

In this workshop, using the video camera, Michael will show how media literacy connects whole language and elements of the media and how to integrate it into an elemntary or secondary classroom.

Space limited to 20. R.S.V.P. 931-8731, local 1415.

A second session offered by popular demand

The Centre for Literacy and Literacy Partners of Quebec are pleased to bring back a week-long intensive tutor training

Tutor and Instructor Training for Adult Literacy

Leader: Phil Davison, Training Program Developer, Department of Education and Job Training, Nova Scotia
Time: January 1993, **dates T.B.A.**

This research-based model of training was developed as an International Literacy Year project in Nova Scotia with support from the National Literacy Secretariat. The intensive week will prepare tutors to work with individual students and will also help teachers integrate more effective reading, writing, speaking, and listening strategies into regular classroom teaching.

While addressed primarily to teachers/tutors of literacy and language, the program has been followed by teachers in other subject areas. It provides ascaffold for learning across the disciplines and across grade levels. The week can also be of interest to tutors who have taken previous training but who wish to enhance their repertoire of teaching strategies. For details of schedule and registration instructions, call 931-8731, local 1415.

Feminist Literacy Workers Network holds inaugural conference

by Carol Potter

The inaugural conference of the Feminist Literacy Workers Network (FLWN) attracted some eighty women to Vancouver in May from all the provinces and territories in Canada. The purpose of the conference was to give delegates the opportunity of talking together about the problems and challenges they share as women working in literacy whether as one to one tutors, class or group leaders, teachers or program co-ordinators [see BOX 1].

BOX 1

The two-day conference was organized into small-group discussions and speak-outs on topics chosen by the delegates, including questions such as:

- What does it mean to be a feminist literacy worker?
- What are the frustrations and implications of being a feminist in communities and classrooms ?
- How is volunteerism a feminist issue ?
- What can we do to improve working conditions for feminist literacy workers ?
- What do we know about how women learn?
- What can we do to overcome student acceptance of stereotypical views of women?
- What are the special problems of women of colour ?
- What can we do about racism in our classrooms ?
- What is the role of literacy in the First Nations' progress towards self-determination ?
- What issues face lesbianism in the classroom ?

Delegates generally agreed that literacy workers face three major problems. First, literacy work is another feminist ghetto (99% of literacy workers are women), and most of the work is done by volunteers. Paid jobs are few and poorly paid as funding for programs is not easily available.

Second, most literacy students are also female as the twin constraints of child rearing and literacy difficulties combine to keep women with low levels of literacy at home, either dependent or on welfare, whereas men with the same level of ability are more likely to get jobs that do not require literacy. It was also pointed out that many women who enroll in literacy programs suffer from abuse and violence in the home. The resulting poor self-esteem is an important contributing factor in their difficulties with literacy. Delegates felt that a major aspect of literacy training must focus on ways of helping students raise self-esteem.

Third, the literacy movement is not working hard enough on behalf of women who are different, i.e. disabled women, women of colour, lesbians. This point was brought home by a wheel-chair bound woman who could not get to a literacy group because there was no ramp to the building where meetings were held.

At the close of the conference participants agreed to establish FLWN as a permanent network to address the interests and needs of feminist literacy workers in Canada. [See BOX 2]

Carol Potter teaches study skills at Dawson College and has tutored adult literacy students for many years. In 1992, she has been active in developing a new women's literacy project at the Y.W.C.A. in downtown Montreal.

BOX 2

Objectives of the Feminist Literacy Workers Network (FLWN)

1) be a national voice for women's literacy needs;
2) co-ordinate with other groups to lobby governments for on-going funding and improved access for female learners;
3) raise awareness of feminist issues with other literacy organizations;
4) provide ongoing personal and professional support for FLWN members;
5) build the FLWN;
6) improve working conditions for FLWN members;
7) promote a feminist conciousness through means such as the use of non-sexist material and non-sexist language and imagery.

Call for Papers

- Canadian Council of Teachers of Language Arts (formerly CCTE) for the May 1993 conference in Regina. Proposal forms available from Salina Shrofel, Faculty of Education, University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan, S4S 0A2. Deadline: November 15, 1992.

• Commission on Adult Basic Education National Conference

for June 7 -11, 1993
in New Orleans, LA.
Proposal forms available from Ann Justice, 200-18th Street, Lafayette, LA, (318) 232-3849.
Deadline: January 15, 1993.

Canadian Literacy Thesaurus now available

The Canadian Literacy Thesaurus/Thésaurus canadien d'alphabétisation is a bilingual standardized vocabulary designed to help in organizing and finding documents in the field of adult literacy.

The thesaurus contains 1770 descriptors in English and 1800 descriptors in French.

The thesaurus is useful to individuals who wish to access literacy collections, index their own materials, or familiarize themselves with the Canadian terminology in the field. It will be a useful reference tool in literacy resource centres, in libraries with collections in literacy, and in literacy databases.

To order, send a cheque for $40.00 per copy payable to the Canadian Literacy Thesaurus Coalition. Return to: Canadian Literacy Thesaurus Coalition, 21 Park Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4W 2N1. Please allow 4 weeks for delivery.

Literacy Across the Curriculum 1992-93 Workshops

• Literacy assessments: large-scale and classroom

Leaders: Stan Jones, Carleton,
Scott Murray, Statistics Canada
Date Wednesday, November 18, 1992
Time 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

• Using writing in teaching social sciences

Leader: Douglas Vipond, St. Thomas University, Fredericton
Date: Thursday, February 4, 1992
Time: 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

• Say it right: Teaching students to speak better in the classroom and on the job

Leader: Harvey Berger, Vanier College
Date: Friday, February 19, 1993
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

N.B. This course will also be offered as a fifteen-hour PERFORMA course. The remaining nine hours will be given over the following three weeks in weekly 3-hour sessions.

• Shakespeare in the teepee —a paradox?

Native education in the schools & colleges
Leaders: Suzanne Smith Taylor and Janet Wood, John Abbott College
Date: Thursday, March 4, 1993
Time: 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

• Literacy, myths and legacies:

Lessons from the history of literacy
Leader: Harvey J. Graff,
Date: Thursday, April 1, 1993
Time: 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

• Evaluating writing

Leader: Lee Odell,
Rensselaer Polytechnic
Date: Friday, April 30, 1993
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS:
Registration is limited to 25/workshop (except Berger, limited to 20). For information, call Catherine Duncan, 931-8731, local 1415.

LPQ

Literacy Partners of Quebec(LPQ)

• First board elected

Literacy Partners (LPQ), Quebec's English-language literacy coalition held its first annual general at Dawson College meeting on October 1, 1992 . More than fifty member groups ratified a constitution and elected its first board. The executive are: Ann Gauvin, President; Linda Shohet, Vice-President; Ann Nayer, Treasurer; and Clare Slonosky, Secretary.

• Directory of English Adult Literacy

The coalition has compiled its first resource directory of English adult literacy in Quebec listing both organizations, groups, and individual practitioners. To order a copy, contact Michael Stephens, Outreach Coordinator, Literacy Partners of Quebec, c/o The Centre for Literacy, 3040 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal. H3Z 1A4. Tel. (514) 931-8731 ext. 1413; FAX (514) 931-5181.

Video on national assessments

- On January 30, 1992, Rexford Brown, author of *Schools of Thought : How the Politics of Literacy Shapes Thinking in the Classroom,* presented an evening on

continued on page 16

The Centre for Literacy thanks Canada Post for its gift of $300.00 awarded as a contribution to the Summer Institute in 1992. It was used to help defray printing costs.

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"National assessments: what they can and cannot do." A videotape of the presentation is available from The Centre for Literacy. Send a money order for $12.50, including postage and handling to: The Centre for Literacy, 3040 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3Z 1A4.

Connecting writing programs across Canada

The Bridge is a newsletter to link learning centres and writing programs in Canadian colleges and universities. Edited by Katherine McManus at Memorial University, it will be published three times a year. Of special interest to Montrealers, the first issue (October 1992) features a profile of the Vanier College Learning Centre.

To receive *The Bridge*, send a donation of $10.00/year to cover printing and mailing to: Katherine McManus,
The Writing Centre, Science Building,
Memorial University, St. John's,
Newfoundland, A1B 3X9.

Bard College Institute for Writing and Thinking Workshops 1992-93

December 4 - 6, 1992 and April 30 - May 2, 1993

• Writing and Thinking • Writing to Learn • Writing to Learn Math and Science • Teaching Poetry: Reading and Writing • Fictions: Memory and Imagination • Language: Power and Play

April 2- 4, 1993

• Writing and Thinking • Writing to Learn • Rhetoric: Arguing Differently • Narrative Thinking: Fact or Fiction? • Visual Thinking

July 12 - 16, 1993

Week-long workshops

• Writing and Thinking • Writing to Learn • Rhetoric: Arguing Differently • Narrative Thinking: Fact or Fiction? • Visual Thinking • Teaching Poetry • Inquiry into Essay • Writing Retreat for Teachers

ENFILOG: Newsletter on networked writing and teaching

An acronym for Electronic Networks for Interchange, ENFI means using concurrent group communication in writing on a local-area network (LAN) to teach composition. Developers originally began the project in the mid-1980s at Gallaudet University in Washington to help the deaf become expert in written English. Eventually, with funding, a consortium of interested researcher-teachers was formed at several institutions. Since 1986, the project has become part of mainstream initiatives in computers and writing.

ENFILOG is the latest effort by the ENFI movement to reach an enlarged constitutency. Editor Trent Batson promises to print "news" about teaching writing in network-based classrooms everywhere. The newsletter will be published four times a year and should interest anyone working with computer-based literacy/writing at any level.

To receive ENFILOG, write to: Trent Batson, ENFI Project, Gallaudet University, 800 Florida Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 2002-3695 or twbatson@gallua.bitnet.

Resources: Volunteers in Education

The resources in The Centre for Literacy are catalogued and may be borrowed through inter-library loan at your institution or by mail (postage covered by the borrower). Documents can be consulted in The Centre from Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. If you cannot get in during those hours, special arrangements can be made to leave documents at the Reference Desk in the Dawson College Library, 3040 Sherbrooke Street West, 5th floor.

In addition to the materials listed in the catalogue, we have directories of programs and services, bibliographies on many subjects, international periodicals and newsletters, catalogues of learning materials, tapes/videos, and boxes of newspaper/magazine clippings. We are also connected to the National Adult Literacy Database.

The entire catalogue listing almost 4000 items (as of December 1990) may be ordered for $10.00 or printouts on specific subject headings can be requested at cost. For information, please call Catherine Duncan at (514) 931-8731, local 1415.

Atkinson Tannis et al. (Spring 1989). *Making Links: Developing a Regional Literacy Network in Ontario.* Ontario Literacy Coalition. [Includes section on volunteers].

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Gaughan, Karen K. (1985). *Comunity Relations Guide for Volunteer Literacy Programs.* Syracuse, NY: Literacy Volunteers of America.10705

Kangisser, Dianne. (1985). *Pioneers and New Frontiers: The Role of Volunteers in Combatting Adult Illiteracy.* New York: Business Council for Effective Literacy.10709

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Local Conferences

The Children's Literature Conference "Words and Pictures"
November 6 - 7, 1992
McGill University
Montreal, Quebec

PACT-PAPT Teachers' Convention; "Dealing with today..teaching for tomorrow"
November 26 - 27, 1992
Montreal, Quebec

Learning Disabilities Association of Quebec
18th Annual Conference
March 11 - 13, 1993
Montreal, Quebec

Springboards '93 "Celebrating Language"
April 22 - 23, 1993
Montreal, Quebec
Speakers: Peter Medway, Norma Michelson, Aviva Freedman

Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE)
Sixth National Conference
co-sponsored by The Quebec Association for Adult Learning
"Citizen Empowerment"
Keynotes: Ralph Nader, June Callwood, Monique Simard
May 26 - 29, 1993
Montreal, Quebec

Chronological Conference Listing

Ten Years of Writing and Thinking
November 6 - 7, 1992
Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson
Keynote Speaker: Peter Elbow

Association for Community-Based Education (ACBE)
Seventeenth Annual Conference
November 11 -15, 1992
Washington, D.C.

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)
November 18 -23, 1992
Louisville, KY

National Reading Conference 42nd Annual Meeting
December 2 - 5, 1992
San Antonio. TX
Information: Dorothy Furmen, (312) 329-2512

Modern Language Association 1992
December 27 - 30, 1992
New York, NY

CCCC Winter Workshop on Teaching Compositionto Undergraduates
January 6 - 9, 1993
Clearwater Beach, FL

National University Research Institute 1993 Annual Conference
"Lifelong Learning: Improving Academic Quality During a Retrenchment Era"
February 10 -12, 1993
San Diego, CA

Fifth Annual Convention on Language in Education
"English, Whose English?"
March 22 - 26, 1993
University of East Anglia
England

The Teaching and Learning of Argument
March 29 - 30, 1993
University of York
England

1993 Conference on College Composition and Communication
March 31 - April 3, 1993
San Diego, CA

The Association for Business Communication
1993 Eastern Regional Conference
April 1 - 3, 1993
Newport, RI
Information: Elizabeth Huettman, (607) 255-8374

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
April 13 - 15, 1993
Atlanta, GA
Information: TESOL, 1600 Cameron Street, #300, Alexandria, VA 22314-2751

Second National Conference on Family Literacy
April 18 - 20, 1993
Louisville KY
Information: National Center for Family Literacy, 410 South 4th Avenue, #610, Louisville, KY 40202

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada
9th National Conference
April 28 - May 1, 1993
Richmond Hill, ON

continued on page 16

Canadian Council of Teachers of Language Arts
(formerly CCTE)
Annual Conference
May 5 - 7 , 1993
Regina, SK

Ninth Conference on Computers and Writing
University of Michigan
May 20 - 23, 1993
Ann Arbor, MI

Inkshed 10
On issues relating to

May 27 - 29, 1993
Ottawa, ON

Information: Mary-Louise Craven, The Computer-Assisted Writing Centre, 530 Scott Library, 4700 Keele Street, North York, ON M3J 1P3; OR e-mail to mlc@writer.yorku.ca;OR Fax Leslis Sander at (416) 928-0392.

Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) Annual Conference
"Connections: Campus & Community"
June 6 - 9, 1993
Edmonton, AB

Commission on Adult Basic Education National Conference
June 7 -11, 1993
New Orleans, LA

Composition in the 21st Century "Crisis and Change"
October 8 -10, 1993
Miami University
Oxford OH

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Media FOCUS
VOL 2 No. 3
FALL 1992
THE CENTRE FOR LITERACY

Masterman on media: Montreal May 1992

The media is not a bandwagon which is going to go away. Rather, it will increasingly reflect history.
— Len Masterman

Len Masterman wove the themes of a one-day workshop around the importance of media education. Although he remains one of the most influential voices in the field, Masterman would not offer the answers or provide a neat package of classroom activities; his purpose was to pull out various issues embedded in media education and to help teachers understand them. He organized the day into four sessions.

As a prelude, he emphasized media literacy as a life skill, stressing the need to re-examine styles of teaching. "Teaching media requires a style which goes beyond the concrete specifics of each medium," he said. "In fact, there needs to be a focus which goes beyond the teacher." The nature of media promotes a democratic model of teaching in which the expertise is not teacher centred. In the media studies classroom, both teacher and student possess knowledge, allowing them to exchange perceptions and nurture the quality of responses.

Session 1
Visual text and its impact

Masterman began with a discussion of the impact of visual material, which he called "high status material." A visual representation is more compelling evidence than an eyewitness report simply because of the popular assumption that "the camera doesn't lie."

Media teachers who attempt to disprove the veracity of the camera find themselves at odds with the reality that the camera can—and does—present a certain authenticity. They are confronted with a difficult question—what do these images actually mean? Because images are polysemic (have many meanings), viewers require a high degree of media literacy to make sense of them. Having been exposed to a great deal of visual text, most kids naturally assume that this text is true because they can see the proof.

Media education is a culturally-specific activity. Because issues vary from culture to culture, it is important to remember that particular meanings are anchored to particular images and situations. Noting that what we were actually discussing was the process of reading, he linked media education and traditional concepts of reading. In the case of visual text, we read images; as with print, the process becomes problematic because of the ambiguity of the text and what the reader brings to it.

> *"For hundreds of years, society has valued reading and understanding the meaning of texts. Yet in today's society, visual image is arguably more important than the printed word. There has been no corresponding focus on reading the meaning of visual images."*
> *–Teaching the Media*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

SPECIAL SECTION

FOCUS IN CANADA:
A review of media education from coast to coast

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Session 2
Teaching about advertising

Masterman grounded this discussion in the fact that current teaching does not always reflect an understanding of current marketing strategies. There is a difference between marketing and selling. Selling, Masterman explained, is what ads used to do. They were product-based and product-centred, bombarding the consumer with factual information about the qualities and price of the product. Marketing, however, is consumer-centred and uses sophisticated methods of audience research to discover audience needs. It assumes that if you understand the audience, you can produce a product which meets its needs; the product will sell itself.

Because of their impact on audiences, modern advertising strategies have definite implications for media education. Promotional and marketing techniques have segmented audiences, delivering them for sale to advertisers. The programs are no longer the product, the audience is. That audience is often children and adolescents. Masterman stressed that no institutions, not even schools, are exempt from marketing developments. Teachers must understand this when teaching advertising.

Masterman is concerned about the lack of critical response to this reality, and current controversy about commericial advertising in the classroom justifies this concern.

Masterman underscored his point by questioning the extent to which the marketing system is serving the needs of all. He showed a video produced for British advertisers which raised questions about the integrity of the production. Was the narrator there to serve the viewers or the advertisers.? Having students reproduce commercials can be a very valuable exercise, Masterman pointed out, if they are aware of questions like these and produce their commercials from a critical perspective.

> *"Tomorrow's world, in fact, will be increasingly dominated by mass media and communications technologies. Generations of the future will need to understand how the mass media influence society."*
>
> *–Teaching the Media*

Session 3
Sponsorship: Advertising thinly veiled

If, at first, this seemed like an unlikely topic at a presentation on media literacy, the connection quickly became clearer.

In outlining the objectives of sponsorship as a marketing device, Masterman linked it to both education and advertising. As government funding in education shrinks, the need to find alternate forms of funding increases. He stressed that sponsorship is not a form of charity; it is a form of advertising. The danger for educators is that what began as topping up money becomes core funding, and the better we get at topping up, the less funding governments will give.

He cautioned educators against allowing sponsors' conservative values to inhibit cultural and artistic potential in the arts, media and education. Reconciling the two often demands that educational institutions compromise the values and integrity of their "products" as they feel compelled to serve two masters.*

Session 4
Teaching documentary: The myth of the "fly on the wall"

The widely accepted assumption about documentary is that it is real because there is no commentary or script; because there is no apparent mediator, the viewer feels like the "fly on the wall." However, as Masterman noted, even though this objectivity is what many teachers want of certain films, no film can aspire to it.

While there may be no commentary or script in a documentary, the concept of the narrative underlies all forms which communicate information. The camera establishes a point of view with every shot; as a result, it mediates the text. The camera is intrusive, even in a documentary. Masterman believes that students need to understand that editing destroys the dimension of time, e.g. that what appears to be three minutes of "reality" has actually been seamlessly constructed. Other conventions like sound, editing and setting up of shots are as important to the genre of documentary tv as to any other genre, simply because all tv must be entertaining.

Masterman ended with a strong message that media literacy is crucial in today's world. Although visual images appear to be simple, they are overloaded with information. Students need to know and discuss this. He urged teachers to act as agents of change by establishing the integrity of media education. They can best promote enthusiasm among their colleagues and students, he suggests, by being positive, helpful and constructive rather than purely theoretical. (JB)

*For a fuller account, see Literacy Across the Curriculum, Vol. 8 No. 2, p. 9.

A 2-hr. videotape of the day is available for purchase ($12.00) at The Centre for Literacy. For information, call 931-8731, Local 1415.

Correction

Focus on Israel (Vol 2, No. 2) please note the correct spelling of MOCHOT and fax number +972-2-617431. *Media Focus* regrets the error. Ed.

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Conference Highlights

"Children, Moving Images and their Future" International Centre of Films for Children and Young People (CIFEJ)

Montreal, September 24 - 25, 1992, following the CIFEJ general assembly in Rimouski, Quebec, attended by representatives from twenty-five member countries.

CIFEJ (its French acronym) promotes quality films and tv programs for children as well as media education. It organizes workshops for adults who wish to write for children, gathers information about legislation which affects children's productions and tracks current research. CIFEJ has consultative status at UNESCO and UNICEF; based in Montreal, it is the only international cultural organization to have its headquarters in Canada.

To reflect reality, media education must be placed in the larger context of society. In bringing together health care professionals, educators, producers, filmmakers and distributors as people who share an interest in children and the media, CIFEJ recognized this need. Beside fostering the kind of interaction integral to successful initiatives in media education, the conference also underscored the value of sharing perspectives and creating new partnerships.

The incidence and impact on children of violence in tv and film and the future of the technology were the two main themes of the conference.

Keynote:

Powers, becomings, and film

Ken Low, President, Action Studies Institute, Calgary

Ken Low approached the discussion of the impact of media on children by linking media education to the ways we learn and the ways we perceive and make sense of our environments.

While many of Low's points about learning and social development may not have been new to researchers and teachers, these concerns have not often been discussed in the context of media education. Media education is rarely presented in relation to a society's historical development, cultural artifacts and family values. Low illustrated how these interact, making school only one (and a relatively limited) source of knowledge.

His presentation suggested that a multi-faceted approach to the study of the media will provide a better understanding of its impact on children and a more effective way of achieving media literacy.

SESSION NOTES

Violence in popular culture: What do children understand about visual productions? Should adults intervene? If so, how and where?

Dr. Robert Cadotte, psychologist, founding member of Pacijou. Pacijou is a collective dedicated to reducing violence and violent representations especially as they affect children.
Jacques Piette, lecturer in Communications at the Université de Montréal

Dr. Cadotte is concerned that Canada's, (especially Quebec's), geographical proximity to the U.S. is too strong an influence on our culture. Between 1980-90, he claimed that the rate (not number) of violent and gratuitous crimes in Canada has doubled. This reflects the U.S. reality where rates are even higher.

Although he acknowledged poverty as a contributing factor in the increase of crime, he pointed out that culture is also critical. Pacijou defines culture as "what is actually consumed as intellectual fodder—film, tv, music, toys...." Dr. Cadotte expressed concern about many U.S.-produced films for their excessive and increasing violence. As an illustration, he compared acts of violence in clips of the 1966 and 1989 versions of Batman, pointing out that while the later version contained numerous scenes of violence and death, the violence in the earlier version was at the level of "silliness," and its effect more comedic than violent.

U.S. society, he said, creates violence in its popular culture as well as politically. His message was one of resistance against the "imperialist cultural steamroller" that he contends is assaulting us. They always present models of conflict and offer violence as a resolution. Cadotte called for the "little guys" to get together to ensure that children are taught that violence is not the only way to resolve conflict.

Jacques Piette's approach to children, violence and the media was somewhat different from Dr. Cadotte's. While his intention was not to defend violence in tv, and he agreed that the media often do present it needlessly, he believes that it is idealistic to presume that it will disappear—from the media or in reality. It is omnipresent.

Because it is easy to find evidence to support or contradict either position in the debate on the influence of violence, Piette suggests that we divert more of our energy to the possibilities of media education as a more effective response to concerns about the influence of tv. He stressed the importance of the new dimension of research on tv in the context of the family and on the important role that parents must play in their children's viewing.

Media education and schools can play a crucial role. Programmes are currently being developed in Quebec to help children understand and question the media by using critical skills which they will transfer into other areas of their lives. As a result, they will become more critical adults, better able to function in a rapidly changing world.

In his closing remarks, Piette pointed out that media education is more than simply a reaction against violence. This is merely one aspect of media education; in the broader context, media education can encourage children to reflect on how the media are connected to their daily lives.

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Finally, he identified copyright as a seriously underrated problem in Canada, indicating that it could be the main obstacle in hindering media education.

Additional Presentations

The Kids Talk Back
This panel was composed of five articulate 11-15 year olds who addressed questions from the audience dealing with their leisure activities, viewing habits, favourite films and tv programs and their experience with the media at school.

What Does the Future Hold and How Can It Empower Children?
Sylvie Lalonde, President, Groupe recherche et développement (ITV) and Dr. André Caron, Director, Centre for Youth and Media Studies, Université de Montréal, described Videoway, Videotron's interactive tv initiative for children. This is a joint effort of the Université de Montréal, the CRB Foundation and Radio-Canada. The presenters outlined their roles and objectives in the development of Videoway, and illustrated their talk with clips from programs currently in use. [J.B.]

News & Notes

Conferences

The Northwest Media Education Conference

Sponsored by 911 Media Arts Centre, Seattle, WA and
The National Alliance of Media Arts Centers (NAMAC)
April 2 - 4, 1993
Seattle, WA.
Cost: $55.00
(excludes meals/lodging)
Information: Gloria DeGaetano, Train of Thought Consulting, POB 311, Redmond, WA. 98073-011.
Tel: (206) 883-1544

Popular Culture Association National Meeting

April 7 - 10, 1993
New Orleans
Information: Popular Culture Center, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Indiana, OH 43403 177/1532

American Popular Culture - New Zealand's 2nd Fulbright American Studies Conference

July 8 - 11, 1993
University of Waikato
Papers will address the study of American popular culture (American context); effects of American popular culture on those of N.Z.; film & media studies, literature, history, politics, music, fine art.
Information: Fulbright American Studies Conference, Department of English, University of Waikato, PB 3105, Hamilton, N.Z. Inquiries to Drs. Jan Pilditch or Alan Riach, Department of English.

Harvard Graduate School of Education Summer Institute in Media Education

July 1993
This nine-day institute will provide teachers and administrators the opportunity to design a comprehensive media education program for their high schools or middle schools. Participants will meet in full groups, small teams and attend panel discussions with international leaders and faculty in media education including Dr. Renee Hobbs, Dr. Neil Postman, and Dr. Robert Kubey.
Information: Dr. Renee Hobbs, Babson College, Babson Park, MA, 02157-0310.

British Film Institute and Scottish Film Council Easter School on Media Education

April 3 - 8, 1993
An introductory course for teachers in primary, secondary and further education to be held at West Park Centre, University of Dundee, Scotland.
Information: Julian Bowker (Easter School), BFI Education, 21 Stephen Street, London, W1P 1Pl Tel: 071-255-1444 Fax 071-436-7950

British Action for Children's Television (BAC-TV)

BAC-TV aims to bring together all those interested in children and television and to support the needs of parents and children. They are currently developing outline plans for a conference, "Children Television and Literacy," sometime in 1993 on the possible relationships between children's use of televsion and general literacy.
Information: Chris Mottershead, General Secretary, c/o British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL Tel: 071-255 1444

Genders and Genres: Reclaiming His Stories 8th Annual Leicester Film and TV Studies Summer School

July 25 - 30, 1993
University of Leicester, U.K.
Information: Summer School, Vaughan College, St. Nicholas Circle, Leicester, U.K. LE1 4LB.

Children and critical viewing: Media literacy conference

sponsored by The Annenberg Foundation and The Annenberg School for Communication, April 8 - 11, 1992

The conference report is being finalized and will be available upon completion. To receive a copy or for information, contact Catherine C. Schifter, Assistant Dean, The Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, 3620 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-6220

Thirty specialists in the area of children and critical tv viewing skills, including critical viewing skills activists, child development specialists and producers of materials, met in April at The Annenberg School for Communication in Philadelphia. Their aim was to encourage more mass media presentations on the subject of critical viewing for use in the home setting by parents and children of grades K-5 .

Despite its stated aim, the conference generated twelve broad recommendations dealing with tv advertising, stereotyping, news, educational programming and violence [see BOX 1]. There was a general consensus that a multi-faceted strategy is necessary to achieve media literacy for all children and adults, and that it is important to present working definitions of "critical viewing," "media literacy," and "media education," since these terms are often used interchangeably. [See BOX 2].

BOX 1

Conference Recommendations

1. Creation of a national alliance of concerned individuals and groups, including the general public, individual and organized activists, the academic community, and mass media producers.
2. Creation of a resource directory to help further these goals and expand the base of concerned and involved citizens.
3. Identification and reward of high quality efforts both in the media itself and among those working to promote media literacy.
4. Communication with and support of concerned groups in the form of materials and resources.
5. Support and production of positive models (e.g. representing cultural and ethnic diversity, non-violent resolutions to conflict, etc.) in books, magazines, movies, newspapers, video games, computer software and all other media.
6. Increased communication of relevant academic research to the public.
7. Support for a ban on tv ads addressing children under age 8; guidelines for violent content of programs; clear program/commerical separators and disclaimers.
8. Support for media literacy PSAs on tv and radio; articles in mass media publications; free educational/informational videos distributed through libraries and video rental stores; media literacy tie-ins.
9. Model conferences involving creative media producers and citizens to share common concerns about the use of the media to persuade and encourage positive role models for our youth.

10 Incorporating media literacy into teacher preparation and in-service programs, as well as in teachers colleges' curricula and textbooks.

11. Support for non-commercial tv as a high-quality alternative to market-driven programming.
12. Organized appeals to the government, foundations and corporations for support of media literacy and critical viewing programs.

BOX 2

Operational Definitions

Critical viewing
the ability to use critical thinking skills to view, question, analyze and understand issues presented (overtly and covertly in tv programming, including news, educational programming and entertainment.

Media literacy
the ability to choose, understand, question, evaluate and respond thoughtfully to the media we consume. It is mindful viewing, reflective in judgement, acknowledging and including the role and impact of the mass media. (National Telemedia Council Inc.)

Media education
teaching how to create media, lighting and other effects; how tv works; how to make a tv program but not how to decipher media intellectually.

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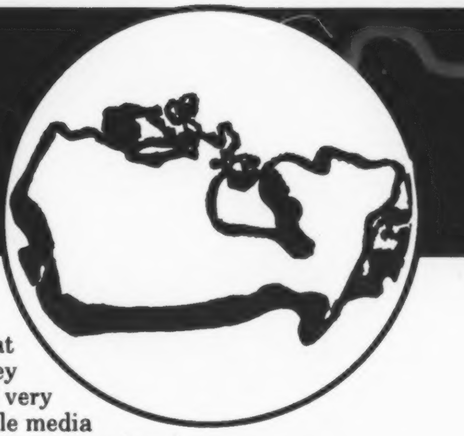
WORLD VIEW ON MEDIA EDUCATION



Focus on Canada

Since education in Canada is a provincial matter, each of the country's ten provinces and two northern territories has its own system. As a result, media education has developed to varying degrees across the country. This overview highlights the existing programs.

Quebec

The English sector of the Ministry of Education of Quebec (MEQ) addressed concepts underlying media literacy as early as 1980 in four Communication Arts Guides (Newspapers and Magazines, Radio, Television, Film); however, during that decade they were used very little. While media education is not mandated, in March 1991, the MEQ acknowledged the growing importance of media education and strengthened its commitment to this area by establishing a Media Literacy Committee working specifically through the Secondary English Language Arts Programme (SELA). [see BOX]

BOX

Quebec English Media Literacy Committee

PHILOSOPHY:
Media literacy is achieved through the acquisition of both critical thinking and production skills.

MANDATE:
- to revise and/or rewrite extant Communication Guides
- to make recommendations regarding implementation of the media guide
- to serve as resource persons throughout production and during implementation of the media guide

COMPOSITION:
chaired by the Co-ordinator of Programs, English Language Arts; includes three high school teachers, two university professors, one language arts consultant

The committee has included activities which are designed to develop and combine skills in both analysis and production. Implementation is tentatively planned during the 1992-1993 school year.

Association Québecoise pour l'éducation aux médias/Association for Media Education in Quebec (AQEM/AMEQ)

This bilingual group has a membership of teachers and professionals at all levels from elementary through university who are concerned with promoting media education. The aims are to promote media education and to create a network to foster the exchange of theory, programmes and information.

Bi-monthly meetings, held in Montreal, combine business and educational components and generally feature a speaker or video to provide current information about issues, critical methods and available media resources.

Information: Lee Rother, (514) 621-8267; Maureen Baron, (514) 683-2001

The Centre for Literacy /Le centre d'alphabétisation

This resource centre and teacher-training project is designed to provide linking, training, research and information services that support and promote the advancement of literacy in the schools, the workplace and the community.

In the area of media, the Centre organizes workshops and other activities related to media education, and has made contact with media education groups/centers across Canada, the U.S. Europe, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand. The media collection includes a growing number of resources from these centers, and regular contact keeps it up to date with developments in media education. The Centre has also hosted several media-related presentations.

The Centre publishes *Literacy Across the Curriculum* and *Media Focus* four times annually.

Information: The Centre for Literacy, 3040 Sherbrooke St. W., Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3Z 1A4
Tel: (514) 931-8731, loc. 1415;
Fax: (514) 931-5181

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Evaluation-Medias/MediaWatch

MediaWatch promotes media literacy by fostering critical awareness of the images and messages that surround us and are particularly crucial for young people.

MediaWatch has devised a workshop for high-school and college students that looks at music videos and advertising. Sessions provide an introduction to the technical aspects of video which expands into a discussion of the construction of images and stereotyping. Students use a videocamera to understand the emotions that can be evoked by camera angles, lighting and editing. These decoding skills are then used to analyze a slide show of advertising images and selected music videos.

For a nominal fee, MediaWatch facilitators present workshops in both French and English to teachers or students. Audiovisual materials are also available for teachers who want to lead classroom discussions on sexism in the media.

Information: Jeanne Maranda, Evaluation Nationale des Images des Femmes dans les Medias Inc. (National Watch on Images of Women in the Media Inc.) c.p. 552 succursale Outremont, Outremont, QC H2V 4N4 Tel: (514) 270-7069.

L'Association nationale des téléspectateurs et téléspectatrices (ANT)

L'A.N.T. is a Quebec-based, non-profit organization providing education and information about tv. Since 1979, A.N.T. has developed activities which promote a greater awareness of tv and its impact. Educators, media experts and interested individuals have worked to encourage viewers to be actively involved as consumers of tv so that this powerful medium can evolve to suit their needs.

In addition to lobbying against violence in tv, A.N.T. defends the rights of viewers and works to ensure responsible children's programming and accurate information. Education initiatives include preparation of a comprehensive media literacy program for use in secondary schools as well as a series of workshops and lectures on subjects such as tv violence and sexist stereotyping in music videos.

Membership in L'A.N.T. is open to people who share the belief that tv can, and must evolve into a medium that serves its viewers.

Information: Francois Blain, L'association nationale des telespectateurs, 1340 Boulevard St. Joseph, Montreal, Quebec. H2G 1M3 Tel: (514) 522-6255.

Ontario

The Association for Media Literacy (AML)

Founded in 1978, the AML was the first comprehensive organization for media literacy teachers in Canada.

The AML is concerned with the process of understanding and using the mass media as well as with helping students develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature of the mass media and their techniques. [see BOX]

Since its inception, the AML has organized six conferences and numerous workshops and is responsible for writing the critically acclaimed Ontario Ministry of Education's *Media Literacy Resource Guide*. AML publishes *Mediacy* three times a year and maintains an updated bibliography.

Information: Barry Duncan, The Association For Media Literacy, 40 McArthur Street, Weston, Ontario, Canada M9P 3M7. Tel: (416) 394-6990 Fax: (416) 394-6991.

The Jesuit Communications Project

The major work of the Jesuit Communication Project is to encourage, promote and develop media education in schools across Canada. The Roman Catholic Church has been promoting media education since 1936 with the publication of Pius XI's encyclical on motion pictures.

The Project offers workshops and talks on many media topics across Canada, in Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the USA at in-services, conferences, and conventions. The Project has over 2500 books and periodicals on the media, and files of materials on media education programs from around the world. The JCP has also helped organize major North American conferences on media literacy.

Information: John Pungente, S.J., Jesuit Communication Project, 10 St. Mary St., Suite 500, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y 1P9. Tel: (416) 923-7271; Fax: (416) 923-0862.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

BOX

Association for Media Literacy (AML) Mandate

- networks locally and internationally
- consults on media education
- organizes workshops and major North American conferences
- publishes newsletters and media curriculum anthologies
- communicates with government and media industry on mutual concerns

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Manitoba

Media literacy education is not mandated in Manitoba; what is being done is the result of individual teacher initiatives. However, in July 1992, the Faculty of Education of the University of Manitoba held a Summer Institute in Arts Education which featured a full course in media literacy at the graduate level taught by Fr. John Pungente. This sparked new interest in media literacy, and there are now efforts to push the provincial Department of Education to include media literacy education in the curriculum.

The Manitoba Association for Media Literacy (MAML)

MAML was founded in October 1990, the result of a Special Area Groups Conference sponsored by the Art Educators Association of Manitoba. Several people interested in media literacy met with Fr. John Pungente S.J. and Neil Andersen to form MAML which currently has a loose affiliiation with AML. MAML promotes the aims of media literacy, in particular to assist in examining the role of the media in our society.
To date, MAML has sponsored four presentations and workshops for educators, parents and the general public and plans to continue with more. Plans also include assisting in the development of media literacy programs for Manitoba schools and providing in-service opportunities for teachers. Currently, MAML has published two editions of their newsletter, *Directions,* and hopes to publish quarterly.

Information: Brian Murphy,
St. Paul's High School , 220
Grant Ave., Winnipeg,
Manitoba, R3P QP8.

Saskatchewan

Saskatoon Board of Education

This Board, the province's most advanced in the area of media education, has been funded for 15 years. It has tv studios and media programs from Kindergarten to Grade 12, including one which teaches students about screen acting techniques, representation, character construction and video productions. Mick Ellis, the Board's Educational Consultant and one of its five media teachers, developed and piloted this program in London, England last year.

In addition to an extensive collection of print and non-print resources, the Board's fifty-three schools are well equipped to support practical work in media education. All schools have at least a basic camcorder, slide camera and audio and video playback equipment. All high schools also have video editing facilities for students. For several years, the Board has listed media and media education among its priorities for teachers seeking educational leave or bursaries.

Information: Mick Ellis,
Educational Consultant, AV
Media and Technology,
Saskatoon Board of Education,
Learning Resources Branch,
405-3rd Avenue South,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K
1M7.

BOX

Goals of Manitoba Association for Media Literacy

To develop:
- skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to interpret ways in which media construct reality
- an awareness of the social, cultural, political and economic implications of these constructions and their pervasive value messages
- an appreciation and aesthetic understanding of the media

BOX

Mission of Media Literacy Saskatchewan

- to promote and develop media literacy across the province
- to establish and maintain communication amongst educators
- to advocate for the development and integration of media literacy in curricula
- to provide professional support

Media Literacy Saskatchewan (MLS)

This group, formed in 1988, brought together educators from the Saskatachewan Board of Education who had been working to promote and develop media literacy. In 1991 the organization became an official special subject council of the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation. The first annual conference was held in October, 1991; planning for the next one is underway. Media Literacy Saskatchewan publishes *Media View*, a quarterly newsletter wit practical information, bibliographies, reviews and lesson ideas.

Information: Mick Ellis,
Saskatoon Board of Education,
405 - 3rd Avenue South,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7K 1M7

British Columbia

The Canadian Association for Media Education (CAME)

Formed in 1991, CAME is based in Vancouver. Its three main objectives are: to foster the study of media, to encourage inclusiveness in media and to foster Canadian cultural expression in the media. CAME publishes a newsletter three times

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

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annually and provides speakers to groups interested in learning more about the media and its impact.

Information: Charles S. Ungerleider, President, CAME, 1363 Fountain Way, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 3T2 Tel: 604-734-9250 Fax: 604-734-9251

National

Canadian Association of Media Education Organizations (CAMEO)

CAMEO was formed in May 1992. Its member organizations include media literacy associations from Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Alberta and Nova Scotia were represented at the founding meeting, although they currently do not have provincial organizations.

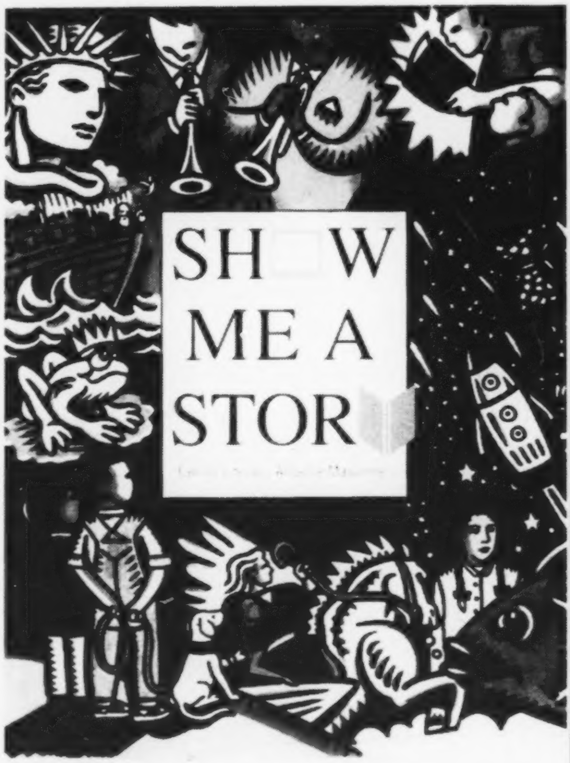
Information: Mick Ellis, Media Literacy Saskatchewan and acting chairperson of CAMEO, can be contacted at The Saskatoon Board of Education, 405 - 3rd Avenue South, Saskatoon, SK, S7K 1M7.

Canadian Professional Media and Media Institutions

For many years Canadian teachers have used films and materials produced by the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Global Television Enterprises (Toronto) and TVOntario. These have been most valuable to media teachers, especially due to current Canadian copyright laws. For more information concerning available materials, contact local offices of the organizations. [J.B.]

U.S. initiatives mark growing link between media and literacy

I. In response to the National Goals for Education in the U.S., the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy is working with the Media and Learning Resource Division of WPSX-TV (Penn State University), Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS) and WQED to produce six public service announcements, three documentaries and an autumn teleconference. These materials will disseminate information to achieve National Education Goal # 5, which is Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning. They will target three audiences: workplace, community and family. In addition, WQED is developing a newsletter to provide an overview of the history and background of public service announcements produced for adult literacy awareness and recruitment at the local, state and national levels.



II. The Family Literacy Alliance [see BOX] is a project to bring books to life on local public television stations. These shows are a valuable resource that can encourage literacy and fun. "Show Me a Story" is a publication about this exciting new public television partnership. It describes the project which enables adults to watch tv—good tv— with their children, and use it as another way of telling stories.

The reality is that the pressures of daily life often make it impossible for many adults to introduce their children to stories in the traditional manner. The magazine illustrates how these broadcasts enable media and print literacies to complement one other, and describes tv as "... one place...where storytelling, reading and books are available to every family, but it's a place you may not have thought of...."

This project allays fears that tv will usurp books. Television can be "a bridge to books," to encourage dialogue between children and parents who would otherwise not discuss stories. These programs also provide a forum for children who are encouraged to write about their viewing experiences and send them in. The writers, producers, and actors participate with parents and children by sharing their own experiences in developing and producing the broadcast.

BOX

Goals of the Family Literacy Alliance

To encourage Public Television Stations to:

1) bring the joy and fun of reading to families by reaching new audiences

2) work with local agencies and organizations to find ways of integrating their shows into existing community programs

3) provide a resource to those agencies through broadcast schedules and access to tapes

4) establish ties between the stations and communities and populations that have not been part of the traditional PBS audience

Museum of Television & Radio

If you plan to be in New York City, put the Museum of Televison & Radio on your itinerary. The vision of **CBS** founder William S. Paley is now a reality— a nonprofit institution which welcomes people to experience its collection of over 40,000 television and radio programs and commercials.

To avoid disappointment, visitors must be aware that this is not a traditional museum where one wanders from room to room or exhibit to exhibit. Being a collection of television and radio artifacts, it is presented through its own technologies—computer, television, wide screen and radio. What appears to be a rather small building belies the size of its contents.

The collection is overwhelming. To even scratch the surface, plan to return often and spend hours exploring the archives which offer a plethora of possibilities including ads, news, drama, comedy and more.

The Museum's library and individual viewing and listening consoles are easy to use for research or entertainment. Visitors use a computer to make up to four selections (two hours) per viewing/listening session. Those unfamiliar with computers or seeking specific information can get help from willing and knowledgable staff.

There are daily screenings in the theatres or screening rooms. Schedules are provided for 45-minute sessions which cover a range of topics, e.g. *Bob & Ray, Discussion Series...Olivier on Television, Sights and Sounds of American Politics and Children's Specials.*

An Education Department offers group visits, public classes, seminars and workshops in re-creating radio for children ages 8-13.

Before or after using the library or attending scheduled screenings, visitors can walk through the Steven Spielberg Gallery, a tribute to Jim Henson's World of Television which features photos of many *Sesame Street, Muppets* and *Fraggle Rock* characters.

Having spent one afternoon there, I came away with only a glimpse of what it offers and an eagerness to come back soon. [JB]

The Museum Of Television & Radio, 25 West 52 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 (212) 621 - 6800 Museum hours: Tuesdays-Sundays 12:00-6:00 p.m.; Thursday evenings until 8:00 p.m.; Friday evenings until 9:00 p.m. (theatres only) Closed on Mondays, Christmas and New Year's Days, Independene Day Thanksgiving Day (U.S.). Admssion is $5.00 for adults, $4.00 for students, and $3.00 for children.

The influence of TV on families

The results of an investigative study sponsored by the Government of Quebec, Conseil de la famille was published in May 1992. The 100-page document titled, "Familles et television" is innovative in that it is based primarily on the viewer as a member of a family. The authors consulted with viewers' associations and parent groups to examine the effects of tv on behaviour, leisure, and culture and family values.

The research was conducted by Gaston Gauthier, project co-ordinator and consultant in family and community development at the Montreal Catholic School Commission and General Manager of Domotique, a consulting group; Michel Pichette, Past-President of l'association nationale des telespectateurs; Nathalie N. Bouchard, doctoral student, and Christiane Hardy, General Manager of Hardy-Dubois and Counsellor in cultural and municipal development.

The consultations revealed the complexity of the issues and indicated the need to shift the focus of research from the point of view of the producer to that of the viewer.

The document is limited by its intention simply to explore the questions; however it attempts to re-evaluate the viewer's traditional role and to make people more aware of the need to become informed and involved in order to influence the media's effects.

The paper is also a call to action, as Gaston Gauthier proposes the creation of a Viewers' Council which would report to either the Executive Council or the Minister responsible for family policy. This Council would give family associations or groups of viewers from every region of the province the opportunity to influence the content of programs from the point of view of the family. Until now, content has been left to broadcasters.

The document, available at the The Centre for Literacy, is currently published in French only; however, an English summary is being prepared.

Information:
Conseil de la famille du Quebec,
Jean-Pierre Lamoureux,
1245 chemin Sainte-Foy, bureau 342,
Quebec City, QC, Canada G1S 4P2.

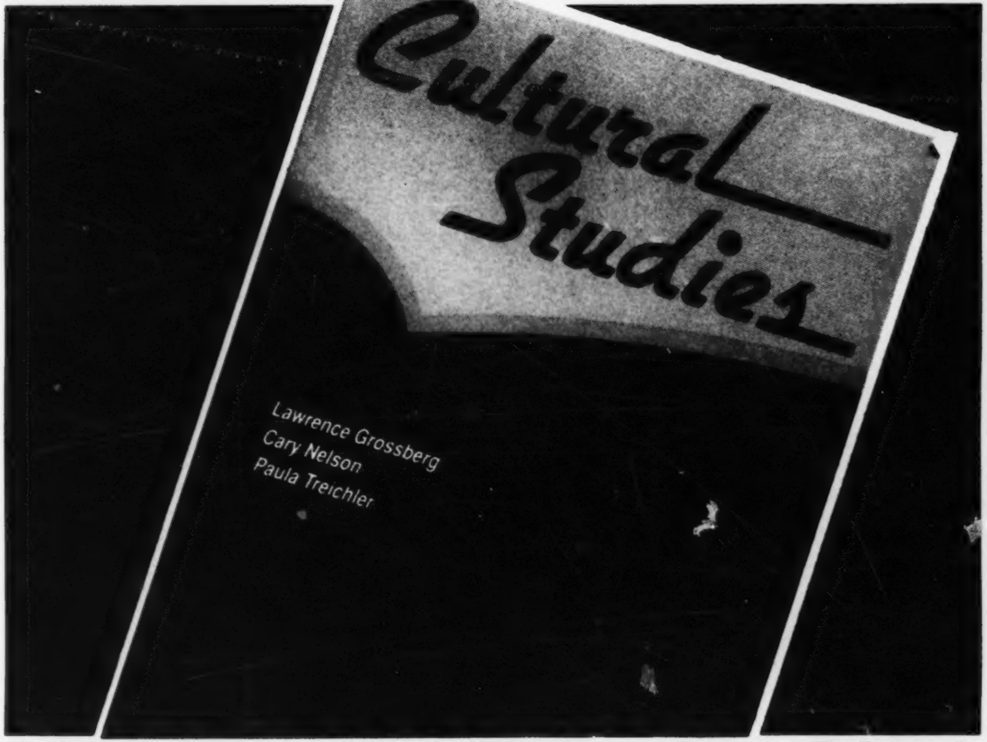
Reviews

***Cultural Studies*, ed. by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson & Paula Treichler, Routledge (New York, 1992) 730 pp.**

Emerging questions about media education have brought a greater awareness of cultural studies,which seems to be experiencing a general international popularity in academic circles. Cultural studies defies traditional approaches, for it is a field which combines a myriad of theories, paradigms and issues, making it anti-disciplinary and interdisciplinary at the same time.

Cultural Studies is a substantial anthology directed to a wide audience. To suggest that it is an "easy read" would be misleading; the very nature of the field requires that one not be deterred by the density of some of the theory. However, *Cultural Studies* succeeds in making much of its content quite accessible. Part of this success can be attributed to its user-friendly structure.

In keeping with recent college textbook design and recognizing that this collection does not lend itself to being read in the conventional manner, the editors included *A User's Guide to This Book* in addition to the *Contents* .



The Guide lists sixteen headings [e.g.The History of Cultural Studies; Gender and Sexuality; Race and Ethnicity; Science, Culture and the Ecosystem; Pedagogy] and categorizes the essays according to major focus. Because cultural studies cuts across a variety of issues, it is difficult to be categorical about theories; therefore, the *User's Guide* cross-references essays. Readers can match them to particular interests.

Many of the forty contributors presented these papers at an international conference, "Cultural Studies Now and in the Future" held from April 4 - 9, 1990, at the University of Illinois. A number of others were invited to submit papers for the book. Stuart Hall, Simon Frith, Janice Radway, John Fiske and Henry Giroux are among those included, representing both the British and American perspectives, another strength of the book.

For readers who seek a better understanding of cultural studies,*Cultural Studies* offers the option of reading only selected essays or of embarking upon a more intense reading of the entire book. The latter is definitely an ambitious endeavour. (JB)

BOX

Schooling as cultural politics

"By viewing schooling as a form of cultural politics, radical educators can bring the concepts of culture, voice and difference together to create a borderland where multiple subjectivities and identities exist as part of a pedagogical practice that provides the potential to expand the politics of democratic community and pedagogy."

— Henry Giroux, *Cultural Studies* , p.206.

Queen's University: Forum on Television (video) CBC

The Queens University: Forum on Television is a series of five one-hour video panel discussions, originally broadcast on CBC Newsworld, each segment focusing on a specific theme, e.g. The TV Generation, The Future of Television, The Canadian Voice. Participants represent various interests in the area of media, with some of the panelists appearing on several of the presentations; these include Barry Duncan, President of the Association for Media Literacy (Ontario); Derrick deKerkhove, McLuhan Program, University of Toronto; Bruce Claasen, McKim Advertising; and Angela Bruce, Creative Head of Children's TV, CBC. Educators, young people, researchers, and professionals in the fields of media and business interact as a moderator fields questions and comment.

With an emphasis on Canada and how it addresses issues surrounding media literacy, the series offers some relevant insights. The hour dealing with "The Future of Television"

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explores how future technologies will affect viewing habits and lifestyles.

New developments in interactive tv are bringing about change, and "watching tv" for entertainment is being expanded to "using tv" to access specific information. This adds to viewing time and alters lifetstyles. One of the strengths of the series is its potential to provoke discussion and create awareness of the need for media literacy.

Information and copies of tapes are available by writing to Queens University:
Forum on Television,
School of Policy Studies,
Queens University,
Kingston, Ontario
K7L 3N6.

BOX

The stakes of cultural studies

> "...there is something *at stake* in cultural studies, in a way that I think, and hope, is not exactly true of many other very important intellectual and critical practices. Here one registers the tension between a refusal to close the field, to police it, and, at the same time, a determination to stake out some positions within it and argue for them."
>
> — Stuart Hall, *Cultural Studies* , p. 278

Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media

A feature documentary film by Mark Achbar and Peter Wintonick co-produced by Necessary Illusions and the National Film Board 167 minutes

"Judged in terms of the power, range, novelty and influence of his thought, Noam Chomsky is arguably the most important intellectual alive," claims The *New York Times Book Review*. Borrowing its name from the title of one of Chomsky's 30 books, this film is an ambitious and successful attempt to provide insight into the internationally acclaimed linguist, author and radical political philosopher.

Achbar and Wintonick began working on this project in 1987. They weave extensive footage of Chomsky's interviews, lectures in various parts of the world and media appearances, together with biographical information, questions and answers, and critics' comments to reveal how Chomsky is revered by many, despised by some. In an attempt to preserve Chomsky's as the true voice of the film, he is the "narrator" who presents his own arguments and comments.

The editing is not chronological; it cuts back and forth between recent and archival footage and represents the producers' decision to create consistency through themes and ideas rather than through visual images and events. Although not an original concept, the result is effective. A viewer remains aware that this film, like any media product, has borrowed and used several cinematic "styles" to construct its own reality. However, because this characteristic of the media is the very essence of Chomsky's message, these effects underscore the need to watch with a critical eye. One recurring effect to emphasize the omnipresence of the media is the "video wall" which is actually composed of multiple tv screens, each often projecting a different image.

The film reveals Chomsky's depth and unrelenting attempts to point out that we must all take responsiblity for our own actions and their consequences. It also reveals the unrelenting criticism he meets as he questions the roles of both the media and democratic societies in violent and oppressive actions. *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media* illustrates how he responds to criticism, using his tremendous capacity for rational analysis as his best weapon.

One need not always agree with Chomsky or his philosopy to appreciate the importance of the media as cultural products whose effects on society are profound. The producers call for more education programs to meet the demands of developments in communications and media. [J.B.]

The film is available for purchase in all video formats from The National Film Board.

(Left) Shelia Finestone, M.P. and Adam Ostry

Copyright information session October 15, 1992

In hosting this session, The Centre for Literacy and Academic Alliance provided an opportunity for positive dialogue between policy makers and educators on the complexities of the copyright issue and current legislation.

Members of the panel were: Mr. Adam Ostry, Director General, Cultural Industries Office, Department of Communications; Sheila Finestone, M.P. and Professor James R. Taylor, Chair, Communications Department, Université de Montréal, Moderator was Linda Shohet, director of The Centre For Literacy.

For a comprehensive account of the discussion, see this issue of *Literacy Across the Curriculum., page 10*

WINTER 1993 Vol. 8 No. 4

Literacy across the curriculum

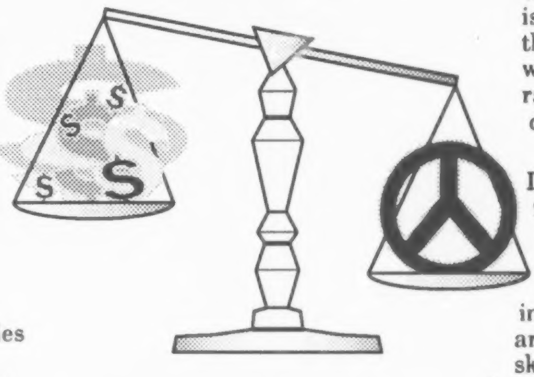
Connecting literacy in the schools, community and workplace

Literacy and human rights

An economic model of literacy

The idea of literacy as a human right is losing ground in public discourse. Studies and policy papers written in the past two years in the United States and Canada have consistently emphasized literacy as part of a strategy for transforming economies from sluggish to pulsing, and capable of winning in a competitive global market. In too many cases, literacy organizations, anxious to hold on to dwindling dollars or to increase their market share of grants, have joined the game, diverting more and more of their efforts into workplace and workforce programs.

This is not to discount the economic aspects of literacy or to deny the quality of some workplace programs. It is imperative to have an educated workforce in a technological information-based society. But an educated workforce is created and sustained by long-term commitment to adult education, not by intermittent short-term reactions to immediate problems. It is sustained by long-term commitment to coherent education in the school system for children and youth where the sparks for later learning are kindled, not stamped out.



Frank Smith, one of Canada's outstanding scholars of reading and literacy has warned:

> When literacy is promoted as the solution to all economic, social, and educational problems, it is easy to assume that inability to read and write creates those same economic, social, and educational problems. Literacy becomes a caste mark, and those who haven't got it are discriminated against... The language used to describe people who don't read and write well is often reminiscent of some of the most prejudiced ways in which handicapped people or racial or other minorities are discussed.[1]

It is not literacy programs alone that will transform an economy or a society.

What about those who are not in the workforce because there are no jobs? The talk of a great skills shortage is difficult to document. There is a great dislocation in the Canadian economy, but no evidence to prove that this is mainly attributable to an unskilled workforce.

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5 **In the classroom: Job descriptions for students**
6 **Literacy & street youth**
8 **Women & literacy**
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12 **Beyond the composition ghetto**
13 **Announcements**
15 **Conferences**

The Centre for Literacy Montreal, Quebec

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On a 1992 visit to Calgary, I had breakfast with a human resources executive from a large local corporation. She spoke with dismay of having signed 40 letters of rejection to job applicants before coming to breakfast that morning. Another colleague from an Ontario utilities company, asked with surprise, "Do you still acknowledge applications? We've had to stop. Last year, we received 40,000 for 800 jobs. It was all we could do to open them, and of the ones I saw, there were few who were not qualified. It's tragic." These people can compete, but have no jobs.

A human rights model

What do we offer to those who **cannot** compete? What do we offer to those who will **never** be able to compete, no matter what training becomes available?

These are citizens who deal with government bureaucracies and with landlords; who have medical and legal needs. Despite surveys on functional literacy, most of these people have strategies for everyday living, and contribute to their communities and families. These are people who might not sign up for classes if they were available. But they are also people who often need some extra help to understand and to claim their rights. They might be poor, minority, female, single, elderly, disabled, homeless (see p.) or any combination of these. They cannot compete for new information-based jobs; they cannot help children with homework or read notes from school or talk comfortably to teachers; they cannot fill in medical forms or read the print on prescription labels. And they are people who are being ignored in the shift to a purely economic rationale for literacy.

Louise Miller, a long-time advocate for literacy and popular education, discussed literacy as a human right in a 1990 study. She argues that while efforts must continue to improve literacy learning in schools and increase access for adult learners in both community and workplace, we must ensure that those with low-level literacy are not discriminated against.

In relation to work, she suggests a number of measures including unrestricted access to literacy activities for the jobless who need them, and maintenance of support over the time required to attain a reasonable level, likely more than one year. For those working, she recommends incorporating literacy into company or union training programs or offering special educational leaves. There are job requirement clauses that could be reviewed to determine if literacy requirements were inserted arbitrarily or reflect the real demands of the job.

Commenting on participation in democratic processes, Miller notes that agendas and discussions often focus on written materials. She suggests more use of the visual and audiovisual. Electoral ballots could have photos of the candidates. In community organizations, there could be more oral transmission of information, and simplification of documents and procedures. The use of plain language in government and legal communications is implicit.

Miller was not minimizing the importance of developing literacy services when she made this case. She was intent on raising public awareness of the experience of those with limited literacy to help eliminate the prejudice they face.

In 1992, the Canadian Bar Association published a report on access to justice for those with low-level literacy (see p. 10). Buried in a footnote of that report is the observation that some prisons in the U.S. have made literacy training mandatory as a condition for parole. This passes without comment. But there are human rights questions raised here too. More and more American programs are mandating literacy for single mothers on welfare as well as for prisoners, and many Canadians are calling for the same measures here. Making programs available and providing incentives is one thing. Threatening sustenance or abrogating rights if someone does not seize these opportunities is another.

Louise Miller wrote in 1990. There are not many voices raised today on behalf of the marginalized. It is not politically correct to discuss the uncompetitive. Even schools are borrowing the rhetoric of competition. It is time for literacy and educational organizations to restore the balance. [L.S.]

Literacy Across the Curriculum
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[1] Frank Smith, "Overselling Literacy," Phi Beta Kappan, January 1989, p.355. Quoted in Louise Miller, *Illiteracy and Human Rights*, The National Literacy Secretariat, 1990.

1 On connecting narrative, thinking and women's ways of researching

If you're engaged as I am in research that's embedded in interpretive-descriptive processes, your major research tool is trying to articulate clearly the understandings that you're coming to - and writing is integral to this process. Interpretive-descriptive research is very different from traditional research in the social sciences, which relies on statistical tools to communicate findings. In the research that my colleagues and I do, we're following in the steps of such social scientists as Piaget, Perry, Kohlberg, and Gilligan. They all are writing a story that grows out of conversation, and they savor the words of the people they've been interviewing, putting the words in the story line.

The goal of their work is to understand and describe people's thinking, to try to understand the structures of the mind, so the only tool they have is language: language for eliciting people's thoughts, language for trying to understand the deep organizing principles of thought, and finally, language for articulating these things. So narrative has become a particularly important tool for social scientists who are trying to understand thinking.

Mary Field Belenky interviewed in "Composition, Collaboration, and Women's Ways of Knowing," *(Inter)views, Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Rhetoric and Literacy*, edited by Gary A. Olson and Irene Gale, Southern Illinois University Press (1991), p.29. [SEE REVIEWS, p. 11]

2 On something called critical thinking

In education, however, concern with something specific called *critical thinking* has reached almost obsessive proportions. Statements of education objectives, particularly in social studies and English, often refer to a need for more and better critical thought. Critical thinking is perceived as a valuable skill, or set of skills, lacking in large numbers of students from grade school to university.

It is assumed that the skills can be learned, and therefore taught, and also measured in objective tests. But oddly enough, while the term is so assertively employed, there is great uncertainty about what it actually means, especially among people who are motivated to "improve education" or who are held responsible for the improvement.

While the world in general tends to regard the way people think in terms of their motives, personality characteristics, or general competence, educators typically perceive thinking in terms of skills and deficiencies of learning and teaching. If students do not behave in a certain manner, it is assumed that they are unable to do so, not that they might prefer not to.

Frank Smith, *To Think*, Teacher's College Press (1990), p.92.

Equity and diversity — principles of good workplace education

Notes from a conference presentation by Sue Folinsbee Waugh, consultant with ABC Canada, at "Dimensions of Literacy: Literacy in a Multicultural Society," Concordia University, Montreal, October 1992

In guiding the discussion, Folinsbee stressed the principles of equity (including history, religion, language, age, sexual orientation) and diversity (including gender, geography, education, culture, and more), as underlying any workplace education initiative.

According to Folinsbee, two considerations precede the start of any program. First, basic skills upgrading alone will not meet all individual and organizational goals. There are larger systemic issues that need to be addressed at the level of organizational change. Among these large issues is the problem of systemic discrimination that creates and maintains barriers to equality of opportunity for certain groups. These barriers may be formal or informal, and may have evolved over time. They may not, in fact, have been discriminatory in intent, but have become so in practice.

Second, those implementing a basic skills program must be sensitive at every step of the process to the diversity of the people they work with. This will mean identifying needs across the organization with input from a representative sample of employees. It also necessitates taking a multi-pronged approach which offers different kinds of basic skills/upgrading programs, and integrating basic skills and diversity issues into in-house training.

BOX

Ten key features of a model workplace education program:

1. **equitable**
2. **endurable**
3. **goal-oriented**
4. **inspiring**
5. **multi-faceted**
6. **needs-oriented**
7. **ongoing**
8. **participatory**
9. **realistic**
10. **worker-centred**

ABC Canada and The Centre for Literacy announce

A Summer Institute – Workforce Education: Developing a Vision

June 27 - 30, 1993 – Montreal

Objectives:

Philosophical

- To build consensus around principles of good practice
- To create awareness of the conflict between the economic and social dimensions of literacy

Practical:

- To learn how to plan and implement a comprehensive workforce program, from needs assessment to evaluation.

Personal:

- To allow participants the opportunity to identify and address critical issues in their own context. Participants will leave with materials, plans, and a commitment for continued consultation from the leaders at ABC Canada.

Presenters:

Sue Folinsbee, ABC Canada; Linda Shohet, The Centre for Literacy; guest presenters

Who should register?

People who work in coordinating positions in government, educational institutions, community-based organizations or industry and are responsible for designing, implememting, or supervising workplace/workforce literacy, basic skills or upgrading

Registration limited to 15 - 20. Applicants will be accepted based on their ability to influence thinking or practice in their milieu.

For information/details:
Linda Shohet: (514) 931-8731, local 1415 or
Sue Folinsbee: (416) 442-2292

Job descriptions: Making expectations clear to students

[When History/Humanities teacher Anne MacLennan developed a course on Printing and Publishing, she tried to involve the students in projects that would force them to put their learning into practice. The highlight is the production of a magazine, for which MacLennan provides an extended outline including a set of job descriptions for the members of each working group.

While the job descriptions have been created for an idealized simulation, the concept can be adapted to any type of group assignment. Reproduced here are an abbreviated segment of MacLennan's project overview and two of the job descriptions handed out to students at the beginning of the course.]

Final Project

A small magazine will be the focus of the final project. Many of the skills and planning techniques acquired during the semester will be put into action. You will not be required to produce the content for the entire magazine, but certain minimum content and planning standards must be met.

You may work alone or in groups to produce the magazine. If produced by one student, the magazine should be approximately eight to twelve 81/2" x 11" pages. If two students work together, it should be double the size. Should the group be larger, the work should increase by approximately twelve pages for each additional student.

You must submit a written proposal with each magazine to explain its philosophy. Develop a formula. Make its target audience an organization, special interest or hobby group, to which you belong or for which you have a special affinity. Your proposal should identify possible financial backers.

In writing your proposal you should make some long-range decisions including:

- What is the function or purpose?
- What type of audience do you wish to attract?
- What is the personality of the magazine?
- What is the magazine's formula?
- Will it contain advertising?
- When and how often will it appear?
- What kind of format — design and typography —will be used?
- What kind of editorial style decisions will be made?

Consider these questions carefully and explain why your decisions are consistent and appropriate.

[The outline details the precise requirements for each magazine.]

Job descriptions

... Suggested job descriptions follow. Keep in mind that few if any of you will be able to carry out all the tasks and responsibilities at the outset of the semester. You should, however, be able to acquire all the skills during the semester.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The editor-in-chief is responsible for the entire project. He or she leads the group and is effectively "the boss." The editor-in-chief must try to make the group function well together. In addition to his or her supervisory role, the editor-in-chief must try to smooth out wrinkles in the operation by providing expertise and assistance to the staff.

Qualifications:

- leadership skills
- interpersonal skills
- supervisory skills
- knowledge of all processes and the ability to assist in every area
- good command of the English language

Tasks & responsibilities:

- learn to operate Macintosh (software programs specified)
- acquire knowledge of design
- acquire knowledge of printing
- acquire knowledge of typography
- acquire knowledge of art
- coordinate the staff
- ensure the production of a well-written proposal
- ensure the production of a good magazine
- supervise and assist the other editors and staff in writing and research and in other areas as needed and requested

ART DIRECTOR

The art director is responsible for the overall design of the magazine. This includes the philosophy, formula, format, page design, selection of art and selection of type. He or she must work very closely with the editor-in-chief to make these decisions, as well as invite the input of the rest of the staff. The execution of the design requires that the art director also work closely with the layout artist and with the remainder of the staff to ensure that the research and copy fit into his or her concept of the design.

Qualifications:

- good creative instincts
- initiative
- sense of design

Tasks & responsibilities:

- learn to operate Macintosh (software programs specified)
- acquire knowledge of design
- acquire knowledge of typography
- acquire knowledge of art
- conceive design
- ensure execution of the design philosophy
- contribute to the proposal
- supervise and assist in the execution of the design
- select art
- assist in writing and research and in other areas as needed and requested by other editors

[Other job descriptions included Managing Editor, Layout Artist, Chief of Research, and Copy Editor.]

Anne MacLennan taught this course at Champlain College, St. Lambert Campus in Longueuil, Quebec. She is now a member of the History Department at Dawson College.

Literacy & Street Youth

A WORKSHOP

January 7 & 8, 1993

Bill Worrell of Frontier College recently led a two-day workshop at The Centre on setting up a literacy outreach program for street youth. Participants from social service agencies, community centres, human rights and tutoring projects came to find ways of integrating relevant components of Frontier's *Beat the Street* program into local initiatives.

Beat the Street is a storefront program in downtown Toronto that offers warmth, coffee and no questions — a safe place for street youth. Staff and volunteers (former street kids, if possible) will offer an ear, tutoring in reading or writing, and a connection back to the mainstream for anyone who asks; but essentially they do not push anything. As long as kids follow the houserules —no racism, sexism, drugs— they can come and go at will. A few have enrolled in an informal formal education project called "Ambassadors" which gives participants credits recognized as pre-requisites for further schooling. Most do not enroll in anything that structured. They are a transient population living a precarious life. No adventure, but plenty of danger.

"It's hard for someone on the street to say I care about something, because if you say I care, it's going to be gone."

(L to R) Bill Worrell, workers from Le Bon Dieu dans la Rue, (Front) Dave Shilton.

Dave Shilton, a 21-year-old tutor at BTS and "Ambassador" who has survived some rough years on the streets, is fighting his way back and using his considerable insight and strength to help other kids who might be ready to make the move. He spared little detail in describing his life to the workshop group, and cautioned people not to go out as "do-gooders" trying to save lost souls. At best, efforts have minimal

BOX 1

Beat the Street: Some policies for students, staff and volunteers

... *Beat the Street* is open to anybody on the street. If you want to join as a student tutor or volunteer you are welcome. Nobody here is too bad, too good, too smart, too stupid, too Black, too Native, too crazy, too slow, too fast, too gay, too female, too male. We ask you, please: no putdowns, and no discriminating words....

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Photos: Dave Shilton

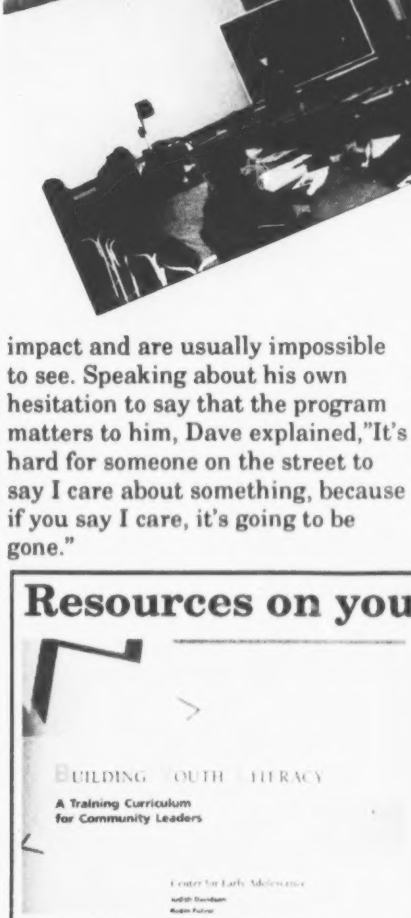
impact and are usually impossible to see. Speaking about his own hesitation to say that the program matters to him, Dave explained,"It's hard for someone on the street to say I care about something, because if you say I care, it's going to be gone."

Street walk

On the second morning, we took a metro to the corner of St. Laurent and St. Catherine in the heart of a district peopled each night by the pimps, hookers, and homeless youth of Montreal. From there we made a street walk of the several blocks, lead by two volunteers from Le Bon Dieu Dans La Rue, a project that drives and parks a van in several spots each night from midnight to 4:00 a.m.to offer food and a few minutes of human and physical warmth. In the morning,there was no sign of anyone. But walking through the cold, slushy January streets, we shuddered at the thought of kids huddling beneath broken staircases in dark alleys to shoot up or rolling victims in deserted lots to get a day's keep.

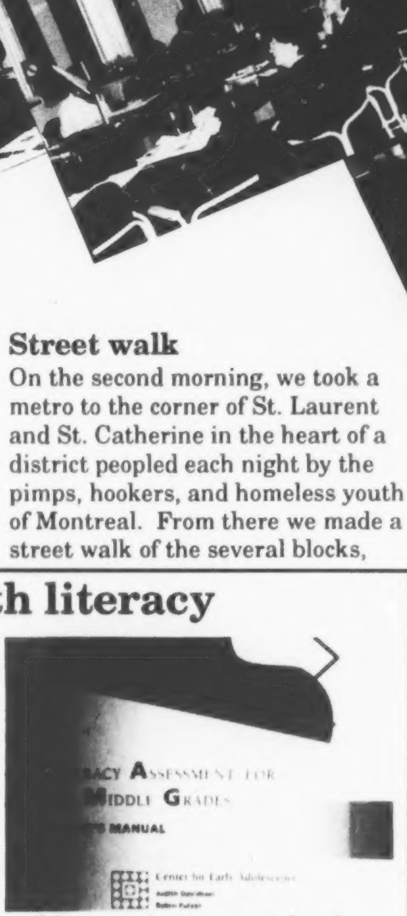
At the end of our time together we understood that working on the streets has its own code of conduct and that success is not measured in grand transformations but in small human victories easy to miss entirely. [L.S.]

Resources on youth literacy



BUILDING YOUTH LITERACY
A Training Curriculum for Community Leaders

- *Building Youth Literacy: A Training Curriculum for Community Leaders*, The Center for Early Adolescence, University of North Carolina, 93



MIDDLE GRADES
MANUAL

- *Literacy Assessment for the Middle Grades*, The Center for Early Adolescence, University of North Carolina, 1993
- *Student-Centred Individualized Learning*, Frontier College. Toronto.
- *There are more resources available in the collection.*

The Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) & Woman and Literacy - Quebec initiatives

As a national body pledged to achieve social, political, and economic equality for women in Canada through improved and expanded learning opportunities, The Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) has made a special commitment to literacy as the foundation for further learning.

Women make up a significant majority of literacy workers and in many settings a majority of students. Besides addressing the broader issue of women and literacy, CCLOW is raising public awareness of the learning needs of both students and workers, and creating resources which have been identified by the literacy community as crucial to their work. They are now disseminatng the results of a three-year literacy project directed by Betty-Ann Lloyd of Halifax. Lloyd's work will be described in the spring issue of *LAC*. The Centre for Literacy is pleased to be working in consultation with CCLOW on Quebec-based programs and projects in women's education. The organization is pledged to build its membership in Quebec during 1993.

For information on activities across Canada/memberships/subscriptions: Aisla Thomas, CCLOW, 47 Main Street, Toronto, ON, M4E 2V6. Tel:(416) 699-1909. In Quebec, Linda Shohet is the provincial representative on the CCLOW Board of Directors for 1992-95. Write c/o The Centre for Literacy, or Tel: (514) 931-8731, local 1411.

BOX

CCLOW activities:

- research and publication on women's learning issues;
- advocacy work on public and institutional policies;
- development of training programs and models, and creation of resource tools for women's learning;
- operation of the Women's Learning Resource Centre and publication of *Women's Education des femmes,*a quarterly magazine.
- forming networks of volunteer groups, and working cooperatively with other women's, adult education, and literacy organizations.

The Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities forWomen (CCLOW) & The Centre for Literacy – present a discussion and debate

Self-confidence in Women's Education: A Feminist Critique

Animators: Fran Davis & Arlene Steiger, Vanier College
Date: Tuesday, March 2, 1993
Time: 7:30 P.M. - 9:30 P.M.
Place: Dawson College, Atwater Campus
Rose Room, 7C-5, 4001 de Maisonneuve (or Atwater metro)

Research over the past two decades has suggested that women approach their education with lower levels of self-confidence than men. Fran Davis and Arlene Steiger raise some fundamental questions about the way this self-confidence has been described and measured, suggesting that much of it is invalidated by sex biases in research methodology and in the entire educational enterprise.

Davis and Steiger will give an overview of the literature on self-confidence and discuss some preliminary results of their own research on feminist pedagogy in the classroom. They explore reasons for developing a fuller feminist critique of the whole question. The presentation of the argument will take 30 minutes. The remainder of the evening is open for discussion and debate.

Fran Davis & Arlene Steiger *are completing the third year of a grant for research in feminist pedagogy; the focus is on the physical sciences in the college. Since 1988, they have lectured and given workshops for university, college, and high school teachers across Canada. They have also published numerous articles on various aspects of their research. Fran teaches English and Arlene teaches Humanities at Vanier College; both are also actively involved in Women's Studies.*

R.S.V.P. 931-8731, local 1415, by Friday, February 26.

Student writers claim awards

Illustrating the danger of generalizing about the writing abilities of young adults, 175 Quebec students submitted entries to the seventh annual *Writing Across the Curriculum* contest in 1992.

Sponsored by *The Gazette*, Educational Services, The Centre for Literacy, and Dawson College, the theme was "Language as an Instrument of Social Change." The genre was newspaper editorial comment such as appears daily on the OpEd page. This year was the first time the contest was opened to senior high school students; in the past, it was restricted to the colleges. Justifying the expansion, two high school students placed among the honourable mentions.

Second Prize: $300.00
Winner: Laliv Clenman, Dawson College, Montreal
General Topic: Violence, sexism, racism in popular culture: how can society protect itself?
Specific topic: Violence and sexism in popular culture: reflections of a society

Third Prize: $200.00
Winner: Prosanto Chaudhury, Marianopolis College, Montreal
General topic: General topic: Ethics and Biomedical Technology
Specific topic: The Ethics of Redesigning Man

Honourable Mention
(in alphabetical order):
Matthew Bell, Marianopolis; Fiona Brooks, Sacred Heart School; Clara Campanile, Dawson College; Ryan Ortiz, Vanier College; Lily Ryan, Dawson College; Mélissa Sabourin, Champlain College, St. Lawrence Campus; Brigit Ann Seliskar. Vincent Massey Collegiate.

Photo: Lori Giroux-Gazette

Front: (L to R) Winners Laliv Clenman, Prosanto Chaudhury, Vani Radnakrishna. Honourable mentions – back: (L to R) Mélissa Sabourin, Brigit Ann Seliskar.

BOX

First Prize: $750.00
Winner: Vani Radnakrishna, John Abbott College, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, QC
General topic: Ethics and Biomedical Technology
Specific topic: Potential for Disaster — a sperm-bank for super-intelligent babies

…….

The Repository for Germinal Choice is brought to us, not by frenetic politicians, but by calm, pragmatic, ethically-correct doctors and business people who speak of improving the quality of society. The Brave New World that looms in their utopia will not be forced upon us by radical skinheads, but by men and women in white lab coats who cajole us into believing that the birth of every superchild is a step forward for humanity.

More pressing is what these scientists do not say. Why should they stop at choosing criteria for the creation of new generations? The same standard that manages the birth of perfect infants could easily be extended to death as well.

Without respect for each individual, for the variety in mental and physical capabilities that each person brings to the world, we succumb to the model of sameness proposed by industrialized civilization. Graham's latest model in designer babies, courtesy of the Repository for Germinal Choice, reflects the idea that all that ails the world can be changed in a cold, antiseptic lab.

It's not that easy.

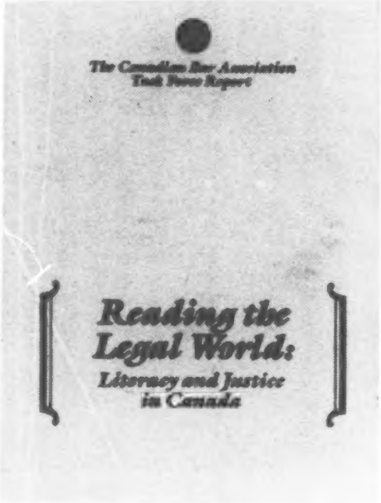
Turning parents into experimental variables and children into laboratory rats only leads to the dehumanization of the wonderful process called life.

Where is the intellegence in that?

Reading the Legal World: Literacy and Justice in Canada - Lire les lois: Justice et alphabétisation au Canada.

Report of the Canadian Bar Association
Task Force on Legal Literacy,
The Canadian Bar Association,
Ottawa, Ontario, August 1992.

Access to justice is a fundamental right in Canada. But as a Task Force on Literacy of the Canadian Bar Association discovered, Canadians who do not read or write very well often do not know what their legal rights are, generally avoid exercising them when they do know, and are disadvantaged within the system if they do exercise them.


The Canadian Bar Association
Task Force Report

Reading the Legal World:
Literacy and Justice in Canada

This task force of lawyers and literacy specialists supported by a grant from the National Literacy Secretariat was asked to examine the relationship between literacy and the law as the law serves people with limited reading ability; to support the work of community groups that help these people use the legal system; and to sensitize the legal community to the issue and help members of the Canadian Bar Association respond to the needs of those with limited literacy. They fulfilled their mandate to produce a succinct readable document as open to a lay reader as to a lawyer or judge. While the report does not undertake complex analysis or social critique, it provides an introduction for readers who know little about the subject. For anyone interested in learning more, there is a short bibliography. For literacy workers seeking legal rights information to share with their learners, the report lists contact organizations in every province.

Recommendations at the end are directed to the Canadian Bar Association, individuals lawyers, professional and public legal education, law societies, foundations and fundings agencies, and government. They touch on increasing awareness, creating materials/documentation in plain language, and working with existing agencies and organizations to co-ordinate and use resources related to limited literacy and the law.

If only some of these suggestions find their way into practice, justice may become a little more accessible to some of the marginalized. The most unusual aspect of this report, considering its source, is its unspoken assumption that there will always be individuals who cannot read or write well enough to claim their rights, and that a society is obligated to make accommodations for these people without stigmatizing them. [L.S.]

continued on page 11

BOX 1

Findings of the Canadian Bar Association Task Force on Legal Literacy

From research with the literacy community:

1. Virtually all legal material is written, and it is in a manner peculiar to the legal system. This creates formidable obstacles for people with limited literacy who try to use the system.
2. Adults with limited literacy are intimidated by the legal system and avoid initiating legal action.
3. Adults with limited literacy do not perceive that lawyers and the legal system are there to help them.

From research with the legal community:

1. More than seven lawyers in ten (73 per cent) have had experience with a client or witness with limited literacy.
2. Lawyers are not yet aware of the extent to which people with limited literacy skills have serious problems undertaking the 'search' that is a central part of using legal information and the legal system. Lawyers are not aware of the nature of the difficulties that these problems create for the lawyer-client relationship.
3. Lawyers presume a level of background competence in identifying legal problems that people with limited literacy skills do not have.
4. While recognizing that it is important to accommodate the needs of the individual clients with limited literacy skills, practitioners who were surveyed rely on adjustments to practice procedures that still presume an ability to deal with written material.

continued from page 10

(Inter)views: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Rhetoric and Literacy,

edited by Gary A. Olson and Irene Gale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1991.

"I remember that one day some years ago...I asked myself, 'Why not start *speaking* books instead of exclusively *writing* them?' Of course, I never thought that we should stop writing in favour of speaking books, but why not do the two things from time to time, and even simultaneously?"

This is how Paulo Freire, in response to his interviewer, recalls the beginning of his experimental dialogues that produced *Pedagogy in Progress* with revolutionary Mario Cabral or *A Pedagogy for Liberation* with Ira Shor. How scintillating it would have been if the interviewer(s) of this collection had borrowed the form to produce a speaking book with the seven scholars represented here.

Instead, Mary Field Belenky, Noam Chomsky, Jacques Derrida, Paulo Freire, Clifford Geertz, Richard Rorty, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, are lead through a series of predetermined questions that leave no room for reaction or response to the unexpected or the unclear. Even with two commentators "responding" to the interviews after the fact, there is not a real feel for speech. Occasionally I wondered whether the interviewer was reading the questions from cue-cards. There is no way that anyone could spontaneously utter such convoluted queries. I also hate the word "compositionist."

Despite these cavils, I was engaged by the quality of thought in a single volume and surprised to hear some widely-held interpretations corrected or denounced by the scholars to whom they have been facilely attributed. Originally published as a series in *The Journal of Advanced Composition*, these interviews examined some of the many intellectual perspectives that have been absorbed into rhetoric and literacy studies.

These seven thinkers rank among the authorities most frequently quoted; if Bahktin were alive, I imagine he might have beenthe eighth. Much current composition/rhetoric/literacy theory is built on a foundation of their ideas. In this collection, philosopher Richard Rorty is dismissive of the interviewer and of the uses that have been made of his thought. In response to the question, "Do you consider yourself a social constructionist?" Rorty asks, "What's a social constructionist?" Commenting on Bruffee's use of social constructionism to justify collaborative learning and peer tutoring, Rorty counters, ".. I guess I'm suspicious of theoretical justifications for practice."

Derrida is revealed as having a strong classical training, without which he advises against deconstruction. Belenky clarifies a misreading of her position on the doubting and believing games. Chomsky, commenting on "the metaphorical extension" of his concept of "deep structure," offers a comment that all of us should mount above our desks:

> ...I think you've got to be careful. In the case of "deep structure," I simply stopped using the term because it was being so widely misunderstood. "Deep structure" was a technical term.
>
> ... It's very rare that you ever get a free ride from some other field. People who think they're talking about "free will" because they mention Heisenberg usually don't know what's going on. Or people who say, "Well, people aren't computers. Remember Godel." That's too easy. Life isn't that easy. You'd better understand it before you start drawing conclusions from it. Sometimes people who do understand can make plausible suggestions or even inferences or guesses from outside the field. That's not impossible, but first you've got to understand what you're talking about....(pp.94-95).

This collection should provoke serious consideration among people in the "fields" of composition and literacy about applications of borrowed theory and about what defines genuine cross-disciplinary thinking. [L.S.]

BOX 2

How literacy can affect legal cases

- Some people who do not function in print may not recognize the differences between words that sound the same. The story is told of a person who entered a guilty plea to arson because on the night the house burned they were "arsin around." *Reading the Legal World*, Note 15, p. 65.
- ... Had respondent not been illiterate, he would have certainly not had an excuse for spreading the product over his fields without looking at what was printed in larger letters on each bag. In my opinion, under present-day conditions, illiteracy does not excuse him from taking the elementary precautions of informing himself as to the instructions printed on the bags delivered to him.
  —Judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada, *Agricultural Chemicals vs. Boisjoli* in *Reading the Legal World*, Note 22, p. 68.

Beyond the composition ghetto

Notes from Charles Bazerman

[Charles Bazermn, compositon theorist, writer, and teacher at Georgia Tech, presented a paper called "Reframing Composition Studies" at the 1992 Modern languageAssociation (MLA) conference. He challenged curriculum designers to rethink the entire framework for teaching writing at the undergraduate and graduate levels. His vision carries over to every level of teaching L.S..]

..[F]or us to understand writing, for us even to understand how to frame freshman writing courses so as to be most useful for students throughout the university and life beyond, we need to begin to understand how the world works through writing.
If we were to take this as our primary task, to understand how the world works through writing, and then to consider the undergraduate writing curriculum as the point of support for the whole universe of literate practices that create, maintain and reconstruct our world, what would we have to know? What kind of research would we need? How should we teach our graduate students to carry out this research? These are the questions we ought to ask if we wish to do something more than advanced training in commodified practices.

Having stuck my neck out so far, I will propose some answers.

First research would attend to all the sites of reading and writing in our society. Moreover, it would attend to those sites at which power, prestige, finances and knowledge are traded, for these would reveal the literate transactions most influential in maintaining the shape of our society. Research would look at the careers of people who spend much of the day writing and would look at the systems of communications that structure and magnify literate activity. It would look to systems of culture and roles of literacy in it. It would look to the literate forms by which individuals participate in work and society. It would look to cognition and the relations between literacy and the mind, but not only with respect to how a student's mind might be organized to write a freshman composition paper. It would look at the processes of literate construction and meaning-making in many scenes through society, realizing many forms of interaction. It would examine how different kinds of literacies help shape the different selves and the worlds of meaning they inhabit. It would consider how individuals project themselves onto social spheres of action through writing and who they become as they do it...

... But it would also look to those who have been marginalized and excluded from powerful literate practices to see what the consequences of exclusion are, what the barriers have been and how the barriers may be overcome.

Research would also look to the limitations and costs of various discursive systems, how they might be transformed, and what the results of reformulated practices might be....
Research would look to enhance choices and motivate reforms.

Research would look to schools as sites of socialization into language uses. It would examine the relation between school literacies and other forms of social literacies. It would of course examine the techniques for supporting literate success both throughout the school buildings and beyond. It would examine how schools could make literacy available to all and deepen the practice of literacy for everyone. But it would also consider how to have school literacies make more sense in terms of the literate development of individuals and society. It would consider the schools' impact on literacy throughout society and throughout life, as lived within the powerful roles for literacy within our society.

Research would look to the history of literacy and forms of written communication to understand how practices arose within different cultural settings and social projects.
It would examine how literacy is deeply implicated in institutions and mechanisms of society, culture and self-formation.

Research would also look at the changing technologies of communication, the implications, possibilities, and consequences.
...
Research would look into most fundamental theories of society, psychology, culture, text, language and communication in order to help us understand our literate practice.

We would make available to graduate students what we had learned to that point, but would more importantly set them out with research tools to extend the questions and knowledge.

The main aim of doctoral education would be to strengthen the practices of writing and teaching of writing throughout society, but we would no longer confuse the training of teachers with a research degree. Of course graduate students ought to learn all we know useful about the teaching of writing and ought to be deeply experienced in the practice of writing as well as the practice of teaching of writing. Moreover, they need to come to understand writing practices in relation to the various pedagogical sites we have created or may in the future create. But if we see doctoral studies in rhetoric and composition primarily as a training ground for teachers, with a little bit of research technique on the side, so that graduates can struggle through tenure processes, not only will we never learn what we need to learn, we will never challenge students to think deeply about writing. And the practice of the teaching of writing will suffer from the shallowness of any commodified practice. How can teachers of writing draw out the most thoughtful writing from students if they themselves have not become as thoughtful as they can about writing?

Call for Papers

1993 Annual Adult Education Conference

November 18 -20, 1993
Dallas TX
In addition to 200 concurrent sessions and roundtables, the conference has been designed to allow participants to follow an in-depth exploration in one of three tracks: Diversity as a our strength; Meeting the needs of allworkers; Organziations as learning institutions.

Proposal forms available from AAACE, 2101 Wilson Blvd.,#925, Arlington, VA 22201, Tel: (703) 522-2234; fax: (703) 522-2250.
Deadline: March 15, 1993.

Introducing a new journal

"The Journal of Language and Learning across the Disciplines" is a forum concerning interdisciplinarity, situated discourse communities, and writing across the curriculum programs.
The journal will publish articles dealing with issues in learning theory, discourse analysis, participation in disciplinary discourse, and the social, intellectual and political locations of WAC programs.

For information or to subscribe, write:
Sharon Quiroz and Michael Pemberton,
Editors, Journal of Language and
Learning across the Disciplines, 1025
Angell Hall, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003.

Literacy Across the Curriculum March - April 1993 Workshops

• Shakespeare in the teepee—a paradox? Native education in the schools & colleges

Leaders: Suzanne Smith Taylor and Janet Wood, John Abbott College
Date: Thursday, March 4, 1993
Time: 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

• Literacy, myths and legacies: Lessons from the history of literacy

Leaders: Harvey J. Graff, University of Texas at Dallas
Date: Thursday, April 1, 1993
Time: 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

• Evaluating writing

Leader: Lee Odell, Rensselaer Polytechnic
Date: Friday, April 30, 1993
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS: Registration is limited to 25/workshop. For information, call Catherine Duncan, 931-8731, local 1415.

McGill Writing Seminars 1993

March 5

• Reader-response in corporate settings: Research methods

Jane Ledwell-Brown (McGill University), Graham Smart (Bank of Canada)

March 12

• Writing in university & workplace settings in four disciplines

Aviva Freedman, Peter Medway, Christine Adams (Carleton)Graham Smart (Bank of Canada), Patrick Dias, Jane Ledwell-Brown, Anthony Paré (McGill University)

March 26

• Writing, science and gender

Fran Davis, Arlene Steiger (Vanier College)

All seminars are held on Friday mornings at the Faculty of Education, 3700 McTavish, Room 233, 9:30 -11:00

Bard College Institute for Writing and Thinking Workshops 1992-93

April 30 - May 2, 1993

- Writing and Thinking
- Writing to Learn
- Writing to Learn Math and Science
- Teaching Poetry: Reading and Writing
- Fictions: Memory and Imagination
- Language: Power and Play

April 2-4, 1993

- Writing and Thinking
- Writing to Learn
- Rhetoric: Arguing Differently
- Narrative Thinking: Fact or Fiction?
- Visual Thinking

July 12 -16, 1993

Week-long workshops

- Writing and Thinking
- Writing to Learn
- Rhetoric: Arguing Differently
- Narrative Thinking: Fact or Fiction?
- Visual Thinking
- Teaching Poetry
- Inquiry into Essay
- Writing Retreat for Teachers

For International Women's Day

McGill Students for Literacy sponsor

"Women and Literacy"

Speaker:
Jennifer Horsman,
author of *Something on my Mind Beside the Everyday*

Date: Monday, March 8, 1993
Place: McGill, Leacock 232
Time:5:30 p.m.

Information: 398-5100

continued on page 14

continued from page 13

Summer Programs

For those interested in portfolio assessment in language and literacy

A London Summer Institute at The Center for Language in Primary Education

CLPE

Primary Language Record
July 5 -9, 1993
A five-day course in London with the development team of the Primary Language Record assessment framework.
For information: Myra Barrs, Director, CLPE, Webber Row, London SE1 8QW England. Tel: 071 401 3382/3
Fax: 071 928 4624.

Read!
A Guide to Quality Children's and Young Adult Books

L'Association des Bibliothécaires du Québec/The Quebec Library Association have produced "Read!" a guide to quality children's and young adults books. With brief descriptions of more than 150 books, information about reading level, format, and publishers, the guide is useful for parents, teachers or librarians. The Centre for Literacy was one of the supporting sponsors for this guide.
To order: 1-5, $3.00/copy; 6-10, $2.50/copy; 11+, $2.00/copy. Postage and handling will be added. Send cheque to: ABQ/QLA, P.O. Box 1095, Pointe Claire, QC, H9S 4H9.

Literacy Partners of Quebec(LPQ)

LPQ

Directory of English Adult Literacy

The coalition has compiled its first resource directory of English adult literacy in Quebec listing organizations, groups, and individual practitioners. To order a copy, contact Michael Stephens, Outreach Coordinator,
Literacy Partners of Quebec,
c/o The Centre for Literacy,
3040 Sherbrooke Street West,
Montreal. H3Z 1A4.
Tel: (514) 931-8731 ext. 1413;
Fax: (514) 931-5181.

Graduate Study Adult Literacy

Carleton University Ottawa
This M.A. program in Applied Language Studies gives Adult Literacy practitioners the opportunity to concentrate on adult literacy, and related areas of writing development and English as a second language. For information, contact Richard Darville or Stan Jones, Department of Linguiustics and Applied Language Studies, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6.
Tel: (613) 788-282;
Fax: (613) 788-2642.

Native Adult Instructor Diploma Program

July 12 - August 20, 1993
Okanagan University College
Kelowna, BC

Offered by the Native Adult Education Resource Centre of Okanagan College in six 1-week modules. All six modules and the practicum must be taken to obtain the diploma. However, individuals may attend specific modules and receive credits throught the Continuing Education Department of Okanagan University College.

Relevant to anyone, Native or non-Native, working in adult instruction or with First Nation adults in community development or education. Registration limited. Information: Rita Jack, (604) 376-0450.

Canada Post Corporation: Flight for Freedom Literacy Awards

Canada Post has announced the establishment of four awards to celebrate excellence in the field of literacy.
The awards and categories for eligibility are:

1. The Governor General's Flight Freedom Award	for a non-profit literacy for organization established before June 1, 1988.
2. The Corporate Canada Literacy Award	for a corporation/business that established a workplace literacy or skills upgrading program before January 1, 1992.
3. The Literacy Education Award	for an individual contribution in program development or teaching.
4. The Individual Achievement Award	for a learner who has participated in a literacy programa and demonstrated improved skills.

Deadline for application: April 30, 1993

Information/application forms are available from: Flight for Freedom Awards, Station 490, Canada Post Corporation, 720 Heron Road, Ottawa, ON K1A 0B1.

Local Conferences

Learning Disabilities Association of Quebec

18th Annual Conference
"Right to Success"
March 11 -13, 1993
Montreal, Quebec
Information: Gail Desnoyers, Tel:(514) 847-1324; Fax: (514) 281-5187

Springboards '93

"Celebrating Language"
April 22 - 23, 1993
Montreal, Quebec
Speakers: Peter Medway, Norma Michelson, Aviva Freedman

The Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) The Quebec Association for Adult Learning (QAAL)

"Citizen Empowerment: A National Conference"
May 26 - 29, 1993
McGill University
Montreal, Quebec
Speakers: Ralph Nader, June Callwood, Monique Simard
Information: Tel: (514) 485-0855; Fax: (514) 487-6725

Chronological Conference Listing

Third Annual Conference on Education for Homeless Adults

February 28 - March 2, 1993
Phoenix, AZ
Information: Marcia Newman,
Tel. (602) 256-0784

Fifth Annual Convention on Language in Education

"English, Whose English?"
March 22 -26, 1993
University of East Anglia
England

The Teaching and Learning of Argument

March 29 -30, 1993
University of York, England

1993 Conference on College Composition and Communication

San Diego, CA
March 31 - April 3, 1993

The Association for Business Communication

1993 Eastern Regional Conference
April 1 - 3, 1993
Newport, RI
Information: Elizabeth Huettman,
(607) 255-8374

NATE 30th Annual Conference

"Taking English On"
April 5 - 8, 1993
Sussex University
Brighton, UK

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

April 13 -15, 1993
Atlanta, GA
Information: TESOL, 1600
Cameron Street, #300, Alexandria, VA
22314-2751

Sixth Annual NYIT Literacture, Computers and Writing

"Computers and Whole Language Literacy"
A preliminary perspective on the use of computers to enhance learning in the classroom
April 16, 1993
New York Institute of Technology
Old Westbury, NY
Information: Ann McLaughlin,
(516) 686-7557

Second National Conference on Family Literacy

April 18 - 20, 1993
Louisville KY
Information: National Center for Family Literacy, 410 South 4th Avenue, #610,
Louisville, KY 40202

International Reading Association

Annual Conference
April 26 -30, 1993
San Antonio, TX
Information: 1-800-336-7323, ext 216

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

9th National Conference
April 28 - May 1, 1993
Richmond Hil, ON

Canadian Council of Teachers of Language Arts

(formerly CCTE)
Annual Conference
May 5 - 7 , 1993
Regina, SK

Ninth Conference on Computers and Writing

University of Michigan
May 20 - 23, 1993
Ann Arbor, MI

American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA)

Conference on Newspapers in Education and Literacy
May 26 -28, 1993
Washington, D.C.
Information: Gwen Kirk, (703) 648-1251.

Association of Canadian Community Colleges Annual Conference

"Connections: Campus & Community"
June 6 - 9, 1993
Edmonton, AB

International Symposium on Adult Education

June 7 -11, 1993
Shenyang, China

Commission on Adult Basic Education National Conference

June 7 -11, 1993
New Orleans, LA

Higher Education and Workforce Development

"Real problems/real solutions"
June 16 -18, 1993
Saratoga Springs, NY

Australian Reading Association

Literacy for the New Millenium
July 6 -9, 1993
Melbourne, Australia

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CONFERENCES

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Gender and Science and Technology Conference
sponsored by the Ontario Women's Directorate
"Transforming Science & Technology. Our Future Depends on It"
July 31 - August 5, 1993
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, ON

United Kingdom Reading Association
July 30 - August 2, 1993
Cambridge, U.K.

Eighth European Conference on Reading
August 1 - 4, 1993
Copenhagen, Denmark

13th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking & Educational Reform
"Educational Reform for the 21st Century"
"The New Global Economic Realities"
August 1 - 4, 1993
Pre-conference workshops, July 30 & 31
Sonoma State University
Rohnert, Ca
Information: (707) 664-2940.

Composition in the 21st Century
"Crisis and Change"
October 8 -10, 1993
Miami University
Oxford OH

Second National Writing Conference
"Building Bridges"
October 20 -23, 1993
Winnipeg, MN

1993 Annual Adult Education Conference
November 18 -20, 1993
Dallas TX
See Announcements for more detail.

Details on listings available from The Centre for Literacy, (514) 931-8731, local 1415.

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